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**THE**  
**CHRISTIAN NURSE:**

**AND**

*Her Mission in the Sick Room.*

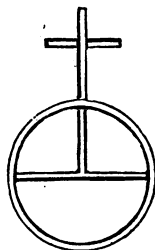
**FROM**

**THE FRENCH OF FATHER GAUTRELET.**



**LONDON:**

**J. T. HAYES, LYALL PLACE, EATON SQUARE.**



## PREFACE.

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THIS little work is translated by one of the Sisters of Saint Margaret's Home. Should it prove acceptable to those for whom it is designed, it may be followed by others of the same kind. The title of the original is : " Methode pour assister les Malades, et les disposer a la mort : a l'usage des personnes qui, par office ou par circonstances, s'emploient au service des Malades. Par le Père Gautrelet, de la Compagnie de Jésus. Bruxelles : Wageneer. 1851."

I am responsible for the translation itself, and for the omission of some, and abbreviation of other, passages. These omissions and abridgements arise chiefly from a wish to be as brief as possible: and Father Gautrelet is here and there liable to the charge of unnecessary lengthiness and needless repetitions.

The Prayers at the end, which in the original are solely from the Roman ritual, are here partly replaced by others, selected from the Parisian offices. The latter are perhaps more likely to be useful to those for whom they are intended.

It is earnestly hoped that the reader, should he derive any benefit from this little book, will return it by offering a prayer for the Sisterhood, from which it comes; its patients, and its orphans.

J. M. N.

SACKVILLE COLLEGE,  
EAST GRINSTED,  
*August 20, 1860.*





## CHAPTER I.

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### *Of the excellence of this work of Charity, and of the esteem in which it ought to be held.*

IF it be true that, of all the graces which GOD can bestow on man, the most precious is that of a good death, since it is that which consecrates and crowns all others : if, which cannot be denied, of all the moments of our existence, the most critical and dangerous is that in which we pass from the world, since it is that which irrevocably determines our eternal state : it is certain that, of all the services that can be rendered to our neighbour, the most excellent is that of assisting him to die well.

The Church, tender and enlightened mother of the faithful, provides for the needs of all her children ; there is no misery which does not find succour in her maternal bosom.

In one place, the child, abandoned by unnatural and guilty parents, finds charitable hands to tend it ; while, along with the temporal care necessary to the body, ministrations yet more precious are lavished on the soul. In another, penitence finds a home to lament

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its crimes ; and, under the care of Sisters, the victims of sin atone for past guilt by the tears of true repentance. Again, to solace the misery of the poor, charity disguises itself under a thousand different forms ; and every where raises monuments which attest the fecundity of its Divine action. Can the sick man be left by her ? Impossible.

It is doubtless a blessed work to go to the assistance of the indigent—to wipe away the tears of the unhappy : it is a glorious task to restore to its first beauty a soul that has been soiled and disfigured by vice. But to watch by the pillow of the dying, and, as a vigilant sentinel, to ward off the dangers that threaten the soul, while occupied in soothing the pain of the body—to sustain it in its weakness, to defend it against the enemies which assault, against the fears which agitate, against the temptations which would overwhelm—to guide with a firm and able hand, into the harbour of eternity, this frail bark, ever on the point of being dashed against terrible rocks—to open a passage into heaven for a spirit whose ruin has been sworn by the banded powers of hell, and thus to assure its eternal felicity—O GOD ! how great, how excellent, how admirable a work !

We may say it boldly : there is nothing more important in the natural order, and we may as boldly add, nothing more sublime in the supernatural order, of things. And why ?

Because there is no moment when the body is racked

by greater sufferings, and stands in more pressing need of comfort.

Because there is no moment in which the soul incurs so fearful a danger—is exposed to so tremendous an attack—is liable to such terrible temptations.

Because the business in hand is the preservation of a soul from the worst of evils, from everlasting misery—and that preservation, eternal.

Because the matter in hand is no less than the assurance of blessedness, without limit of time—without measure in degree.

Because then SALVATION, man's one only work, has to be dealt with in one moment, and entire; and by a single action it is thenceforth definitively and irrevocably lost or won.

Imagine that you had saved, and restored to his family, a beloved father, who, but for you, must have perished. Would not the remembrance of the action be a perpetual comfort? Might not even your country assign you a reward in token of her gratitude? And yet you have done a thousand times more if you have assisted any one to die well; whether you consider the evils from which you preserve him, or the blessings which you procure him. To introduce anyone into heaven is to give him far more than the life of the body; it is even, in a certain sense, more than to give him the life of grace, because it is to assure him an immortal and most blessed existence. If the day of death is for such a person the commencement of his

happiness—his birthday, as the Church speaks of the Saints—you are more than the mother who gave him life, for you have given him eternity.

It is certain then, that there is no ministry on earth comparable to that of which we speak. All its acts are stamped with the seal of eternity. All its consequences are infinite. Its happy results can never be violated ; they have nothing to dread from an unsettled will, and the inconstancy natural to man. In a word, no other work can so efficaciously promote the glory of God, or the benefit of our neighbour.

It has been well said, therefore, by a Saint, that no work of charity can be so agreeable to God as the succour bestowed on the dying to enable them to attain a holy death. For in that moment whereon our eternal state depends, hell redoubles its efforts, and the sick man is more feeble in his resistance of its attacks. It is said that S. Philip de Neri more than once saw an angel standing by the Religious who were assisting the dying, and suggesting to them the words which they were to use.

You then who, by office, by devotion, or by the effect of circumstances, are employed in assisting the sick or the dying, learn to appreciate the greatness and excellency of your work. But *you* more especially should rejoice, who have freely and deliberately chosen as your dwellings those asylums which are open to all the sufferings of humanity, and where so many daily terminate their mortal career. The hospital is the

vestibule of eternity : it ought, through your ministrations, to become the vestibule of heaven. How grand is your vocation ! how noble to the eye of faith ! But do not deceive yourselves : the more sublime it is in itself, the greater are the obligations which it imposes on you. Endeavour to form a just idea of those duties.

## CHAPTER II.

*Of the duty of Relations, and those who minister to the Sick, to assist them to die well.*

**ART. I.** *General principles on the precept of charity.*

To understand thoroughly what is said of this duty, it must be remembered, first, that the charity due to our neighbour ought to extend to his body and his soul, and to embrace at one and the same time his temporal and eternal welfare. This welfare we ought to desire, and, as far as lies in our power, procure for him; for the love which we owe to our neighbour is *like* that which we have for ourselves, though it is not equal to it.

There are, therefore, two kinds of needs to which our neighbour may be exposed: one regarding the body and the other the soul—they may be greater or less.

These two kinds of needs may easily be united in the sick person, who, a prey to pain more or less severe, enfeebled by sickness, often overpowered by violent agony, is sometimes in addition, by reason of his indigence, unsupplied with the most necessary remedies; while his soul, the slave of sin, bound by

the chains of criminal habits, alien from, and hostile to, his God, thinks not of begging the pardon of his crimes from the mercy of his Judge.

If we consider corporal necessity only, and suppose it extreme, we are under an obligation to succour it, even though by doing so we incur serious inconvenience or subject ourselves to serious loss.

But if the need be spiritual—if, for example, we suppose our neighbour in imminent danger of dying in a state of sin, and so being lost for ever, we ought not to hesitate in exposing our lives to save him: for the loss of our temporal life is far inferior in value to the spiritual life, the eternal salvation, of our neighbour; the one then, if needs be, must be sacrificed to the other. If the danger be not extreme, the obligation of succouring our neighbour is less peremptory, and we are not bound to such sacrifices; but it always exists, proportioned in its rigour and exigency to the nature and extent of that necessity.

From these principles we conclude, as follows:—

ART. II. *Of the obligation common to all men, with respect to the Sick.*

The obligation of succouring the poor and sick, like that of assisting the needy, is incumbent on all men: and each ought, according to the condition and the circumstances in which he is placed, to lend bodily and spiritual assistance to his brother. For all, united



in the bonds of charity, should bear a reciprocal love to each other, as having the same origin and the same end, and as members of one and the same body. Now this love cannot be sincere without inspiring in those who are animated by it the desire of relieving the unhappy. If one member suffer, S. Paul says, all the members suffer with it; so ought it to be with you who all compose but one body, of which CHRIST is the Head. GOD, said the prophet, *gave every man commandment concerning his neighbour*. Thus, to save the temporal life of any, or to extricate him from mortal danger, what sacrifices are there not made daily? Consequently, what ought we not to do to save the life of his soul, and to snatch him from the fearful evil which threatens him, when laid by sickness on his bed of suffering, he finds himself face to face with eternity? Every one, therefore, is commanded to relieve the sick with alms proportioned to his means; for it is to the poorest, when the scourge of sickness is added to that of poverty, that the double evil becomes in a certain sort, irremediable, from the impossibility for the sick man to provide for his wants. It is also obligatory upon all, in virtue of the same precept of charity, to interest themselves in the salvation of the sick man's soul: if we ought to pray for all men, we ought especially to pray for the sick who have a special need of support in their sufferings. Let us pray, says the Church, for the afflicted: *Oremus pro afflictis*.

**ART. III. *Of the special obligation which exists for those whose duty it is to take care of the Sick.***

The obligation of helping the sick to die well is more especially imposed on those who from office or devotion are employed in assisting them in their sickness. Let us remember what has just been said of the precept of charity, especially in cases of extreme necessity, and transport ourselves in thought to the midst of one of these immense halls which appear to be the assembling-places of all kinds of sickness, and where are heard so often the plaintive cries of suffering and the groans of the dying. If we take account of the ignorance of some, the ill-will of others, and the great difficulty many find in fitly preparing themselves to appear before God, are we not likely to meet with some cases of extreme necessity and imminent danger of damnation among those dying sinners, where by holy and industrious zeal, and the tact of ingenious charity, their eyes might be opened to the misery that awaits them, and the depth of the abyss into which they are on the point of falling? Where every day—and if the hospitals are large, many times in the day—some one among those unfortunates is set before the tribunal of eternity, and the final sentence which decides his fate goes forth from the supreme Judge? What is that sentence? You who have just received his last sigh, and closed his eyes, know not; but at

the same instant in which you are seeking in the movement of his lips some sign of a life that is no more, there, where you stand, before you, the cause has been pleaded, the tribunal prepared, the Judge present, the sentence pronounced; you have assisted at the judgment of this person without thinking of it and without perceiving it; but have you been uninterested in the sentence that has just been passed? Certainly not, if you have understood your duty; perhaps at this moment that soul released from its earthly prison has received the assurance of its eternal happiness, and it is to you and to your charity that it is owing. I ask, can there exist on this earth a more solemn position—a more sublime vocation—an employment which has more tremendous consequences?

But do not deceive yourselves. The greater the utility, the importance, and the solemnity of your ministry to the sick—the more serious, the more rigorous are the obligations which it imposes on you. For since the eternal fate of the soul depends on the disposition in which the man dies, and you are able to exert so salutary and certain an influence over these dispositions, we conclude that it is you, so to speak, who decide his future destiny: heaven and hell are in a measure put into your hands, and you are charged with the choice for the dying man of one or other of these two different eternities. I do not wish to exaggerate; I know there are some patients who will resist all the efforts of your zeal; but I would impress upon

you the duty of then exercising your charity and doing all in your power to save a soul on the point of being lost. I will here quote S. Bernard's words on this subject, speaking to a priest: "*Curam exigeris, non curationem.*" *What is required of you is not the recovery, but the treatment of the sick.* The salvation of the soul, indeed, does not depend only on your care—it is necessary for the sick person to cooperate with you. But how large a share ought you not to have in it? How earnest should be your prayers, and how fervently should your vows ascend for this unfortunate sinner, since for his salvation you ought to be ready to sacrifice even your life, if that were necessary.

Alarmed at the extent of your obligations, and the responsibility attached to your vocation, you will perhaps say that, in entering the religious life, and dedicating yourself to the service of the sick, you had not anticipated taking so heavy a burden upon yourself; that you have only looked forward, in the employments that have been entrusted to you, to the happiness of serving CHRIST's suffering members, with the hope of hearing one day from His Blessed Lips, that so comforting sentence which He will pronounce at the last day to those who have ministered to His sick and unhappy brethren. But I reply that neither your community nor you have any right thus to restrict your obligations. It is not so much the body as the soul that requires your care; the spiritual

welfare of your patients excites your anxiety more keenly than their temporal good. I appeal to your rules, or rather I appeal to your heart and to your feelings. I do not need any other proof. You will find in yourselves the answer to your own objections.

Further, I maintain that though this might have been your intention in consecrating yourselves to this painful ministry, you cannot in any way escape from the obligation it imposes upon you ; founded on the precept of charity which is binding upon every one, and resulting in the present circumstances, from the necessity of your neighbour whose salvation is at stake, this obligation falls upon you with all its weight. Your very position imposes it upon you ; your vocation has no other effect than that of causing you to accept this position of your own free will, and thus giving another merit to the accomplishment of a duty which is in itself still freer and more voluntary.

For, if the thought of the responsibility attached to your vocation makes it more difficult and less attractive, I would say that He, for Whose love you have embraced this estate, will for your love and for His Own sake, and for His Own goodness sake, grant you those particular graces which will help you to fulfil your obligations worthily. I would add, that if your vocation, in this view, sets before you great difficulties, it also offers you great consolations. You ought to think yourself happy in being able to contribute so effectively to the salvation of souls, and

remember that the more we give to God, the more we receive from Him ; the greater the dangers to which we expose ourselves for His glory, the more abundant are the graces which He has promised to us here, and the brighter the crown which He has prepared for us in heaven. Finally, if the thought of our obligations is sufficient to inspire us with fear, the consideration of our advantages, which we shall enumerate in the following chapter, is well calculated to support and encourage a heart that loves God and is desirous of the salvation of its brethren.

**ART. IV. *The particular obligation of Relations in this matter.***

The obligation of assisting the sick to die holily is still more rigidly imposed on parents with regard to their children, and on children with respect to their parents.

The ties of blood must be very much regarded—they must be very sacred in the eyes of God, since He has given us so explicit a commandment to love our parents, and in order to ensure the fulfilment of this precept, He has sanctioned it by such great promises and such severe punishments. Would He so have acted if these ties were to be limited by uniting us only in this world? No, doubtless : but in the designs of God our relationship in this world ought to have a very great influence over our eternal destinies. Our love is given, not as much to the body

as to the soul, and consequently we should be much more solicitous in procuring the spiritual welfare of those whom we love, than their temporal advantage, of which death will so speedily deprive them.

Nevertheless, judging by the conduct of the greater part of mankind, would it not be said that everything ended with this life, and that death for ever broke the ties which bind us to our relations and friends? That such may be the sentiments and the conduct of those unfortunate persons who, deprived of the light of faith, are ignorant of any other life than this passing existence, I can easily believe; but that we who are blessed with the divine light of the Gospel, and who, according to S. Paul's expression, are not, like those miserable people, *without hope for the future*; we, who believe in a happy or unhappy eternity, is it possible that we should be indifferent on a question of so much importance with regard to those who are dear to us; and that, confining our cares to a body whose dissolution is inevitable, we never dream of securing the fate of the soul which is about to appear before its God?

What! fathers and mothers, you love your children—you know that in a few days, it may be in a few hours, the final sentence which will decide their happiness or their misery for ever, will be pronounced by a God infinitely just and holy, as He is infinitely merciful, and you do not seek to secure them a favorable sentence! And you who profess for the authors

of your existence such a tender affection, so sincere a devotion, confined by the narrow limits of time, you do not raise the veil which hides eternity from your eyes! You do not think of snatching those whom you so tenderly love from endless and measureless evils; of procuring for them the possession of treasures infinite in themselves and in their duration! Either cease to say you love them, or show your love by truer and more solid proofs.

To come to something more positive, I say that if parents are obliged, under pain of mortal sin, to provide their children with a necessary subsistence, they are still more rigorously bound to procure for them, especially in sickness, necessary support for the life of their souls. If it is a parent's duty to provide, according to their ability, for the temporal interests of those whom God has committed to their care by love, it is a still more sacred duty to take in hand their spiritual interests. Finally, if it is a great sin for a father and mother not to bring up their children in a Christian manner, not to keep them from vice, and to abandon them to the corruptions of their heart, and the contagion of bad example, how shall they be excused for allowing them to die in God's displeasure, and sacrificing them as unfortunate victims to the fury of devils more greedy for their perdition than their parents are careful for their salvation? How especially applicable to these circumstances is that saying of S. Paul—"But if any provide not for



his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

In like manner, if children are compelled, under pain of mortal sin, to provide, as far as lies in their power, for the wants of their indigent parents, how much more are they bound to do so when those parents are a prey to the sufferings of sickness? And if it is their duty to succour them in that which regards their temporal welfare and their bodily health, how much more are they not bound to do for that which concerns the eternal interests of their soul?

Parents, forget not then the intimate bonds which unite you to those children whom you have brought into the world. You have given them temporal life, endeavour to procure for them eternal life; and after having borne them into this vale of tears, teach them the way to heaven.

Whatever cause of displeasure they may have given you, or the griefs they may have occasioned you during their life, all must be pardoned in the critical circumstances of sickness and in the presence of death. Let paternal tenderness be re-awakened, that filial piety may be re-animated. In the face of eternity all should be forgotten, and the past should only be remembered in order to find new motives for lavishing your solicitude on those whose need perhaps is all the more pressing as they have made themselves unworthy of it. Fathers and mothers, listen to the dictates of your

hearts and not to your resentments, however well founded they may appear to you.

Honour your parents in their sickness, you who owe to them your life, and who have been to them the object of so many cares—of so much solicitude and love. Do not forget that one day you will yourselves need the attentions which you now lavish upon them ; and by the loving cares with which you surround their last moments, merit to receive one day the help which is so necessary for a holy and a happy death.

Take heed you are not discouraged by the length of the illness, and by the infirmities which they have contracted perhaps in working for you.

Take heed lest you suffer yourselves to be wearied by the ill-humour, the caprice, the unreasonable exactions of a father or mother whose advanced age has perhaps deprived them of freedom of action.

Take heed that their failings—their crimes even, if they have any, hinder not the devotion of your service : the less worthy they appear to you of your labours, the more pressing is their need of your care—the more truly useful you may be in bringing them back to better feelings by your gentleness, your patience, your respect, and the delicate attentions of your unwearying love.

Parents and children, whoever you are—all whose position calls you to succour the members of your family in their sickness, do not wait too long in giving notice to the Priest who has the confidence of the

sick person. In taking care of the body, care still more for the soul, and do not rest till you have assured its eternal interests, at least in so far as lies in your power.

Do not suffer a false tenderness to close your lips when so many urgent reasons make it your duty to let them know the truth. Do not dissimulate, through a false discretion, a danger that is too real; and when the life of the body is so seriously threatened, do not compromise the infinitely more precious life of the soul by keeping up in the sick person false hopes which you yourselves do not entertain. This is not charity, it is cruelty. This is not loving, it is hating. This is not serving our relations, it is betraying those who are the object of this misconceived affection.

Do not delay to send for a physician who, by his experience and his religious principles, merits your confidence. The evil taken in time, and early combated, may yield to the first remedies; later it may, perhaps, be impossible to stay its sad progress.

Take heed lest the expenses occasioned by a lengthened sickness and costly remedies induce you to desire the death of the sick person. Fulfil your duty; God will fulfil His promise, and you will never regret the sacrifices you have made to obey Him.

These sicknesses will be useful to your relations—they will be useful to yourselves; for in the designs of the LORD, they may procure for you inappreciable advantages, as we shall presently see more at length.

## CHAPTER III.

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*Of the great advantages we ourselves may gather from the care bestowed on the Sick and the Dying.*

The service of the sick is, in itself, so painful and repulsive; attendance on the dying, and the care of preparing them for death, are things so difficult; finally, the responsibility attending upon this ministry is so great, that nothing less than the numerous advantages accompanying this work of mercy, can support the courage of those who devote themselves to this important office. We will only enumerate these precious fruits, leaving to those persons for whom we write, the task of meditating upon them; for it is only from this frequent meditation that they will acquire the strength, the consolation, and devotion which they need to enable them faithfully and courageously to acquit themselves of all the obligations imposed upon them. These duties, as also the fruits which we are about to point out, are common not only to religious persons, but also to those who discharge these offices, if it be only to gain a livelihood, or from stress of circumstances, provided that they perform them with suitable dispositions. All these

advantages may be divided into three classes. The first belong to the sick person and to his family ; the second concern GOD and His glory ; the third are the rewards of those who are employed in this ministry.

ART. I. *Advantages to the Sick.*

We shall insist very little upon this article, because these advantages are too evident to render it necessary for us to dwell upon them, and because we have already spoken of them. But we ask, where is the Christian who can be insensible to the infinite happiness which his labours shall have gained for a soul ? Who would not rejoice in having (I do not say, snatched a man who was in danger of perishing, from temporal flames, but in having) preserved from eternal fire an unfortunate being awaiting irremediable evils and torments without end ? If you love your neighbour—if charity really animates your heart, what a sweet consolation it will be till the end of your life, what joy for all eternity ! What gratitude will you receive from that elect one who owes his happiness to you !

Nevertheless, it is not the sick person alone who will benefit by your zeal. Others no less than he will gather its precious fruit. What is the joy of that disconsolate mother, who learns from you that her son, whose death to grace she has so long deplored, has been reconciled to GOD, and that his last moments have been like those of the predestinated ! What

consolation for a wife to know that Christian trust has softened the sufferings of a cherished husband, and that he has drawn from the Sacraments of the Church the necessary strength to enable him happily to cross the threshold of eternity !

Does it not often happen that the spectacle of Christian charity which you have thus displayed in the service of the sick, leaves religious impressions on all the family which will never be effaced ? and that by the salutary thoughts joined to the eloquent lessons death gives to all, we may see those hearts return to the practice of religion, which perhaps for many years had wandered far from it, especially if you take care to contribute to this happy change by the example of exemplary virtue, untiring patience, and unfailing charity ; and if, skilfully suiting your words to your example, you suggest useful reflections to these poor hearts, which, like precious seeds, will grow in time, and bear fruits unto salvation ?

#### ART. II. *The Glory of God.*

This is another motive, and it ought to be the most powerful of all in determining us generously to embrace, and courageously to support, the troubles connected with these noble offices.

Do not forget ; it is for the glory of God, the end of all your works, and the single aim you ought to set before you in all your actions ; now you set forth this glory in an especial manner in assisting the sick,

in fortifying the dying against the terrors of death, and disposing him to accept it with resignation and love. You set it forth by the numerous acts of virtue which you practise in this work of mercy ; you set it forth by the good example you set your neighbour, whom you cause to know and appreciate religion in its true point of view. You set forth especially this glory of God your Father, by contributing to the salvation of His children who in the abode of happiness into which you will have been the means of introducing them, will never cease to love, bless, and praise Him for ever. By this ministry you promote the efficacy of the Blood of JESUS CHRIST, and you multiply the fruits of His bitter Passion. You bring back to this Good Shepherd those wandering sheep that He came into the world to seek and to redeem with the price of so many sufferings and toils. You give to angels and saints companions and brothers. If the blessed inhabitants of heaven rejoice over the conversion of a sinner, what is the joy when this justified sinner, arrived at last at the end of his exile, takes his place among them in the celestial abode, and mingles his songs of thankfulness to their immortal hymns !

It needs not much to determine souls who love their LORD, however little, to neglect nothing that can secure a holy death to the sick whom they assist ; but as we are often more alive to our own interests than even to those of God, it will not be useless to sum up

here the principal advantages which accrue to those who devote themselves to assist the dying.

ART. III. *Of the advantages derived by those persons who attend the Sick and prepare them for death.*

1. The first fruit derived from the ministry is the understanding more and more clearly the vanity of all created things. How salutary is the impression produced upon us by the sight of humanity a prey to suffering, and vainly struggling in the hand of death! What illusions are dissipated by the faint glimmer of eternity, and how is the soul then disenchanted that has been perhaps seduced and blinded by the deceitful pleasures of the world! There we learn to despise the body; there we understand the value of time; there we become sensible of the vanity of riches, pleasures, honours, esteem, affection, of all human advantages; there, finally, the soul, enlightened by grace, shaken by a crowd of motives that battle with it and attack it in all its natural affections, finally triumphs over itself, determines to give itself entirely to God, and cries with Francis de Borgia, Duke of Candia, in the presence of the hideous corpse of the Empress, but a short time before the most beautiful person of her age—“*O my GOD! I promise from henceforth to serve no mortal master.*”

2. The second benefit is the practice of a host of virtues, which are exercised in an especial and often heroic manner by the care that we take of the sick.



"Sickness," says S. Francis de Sales, "is the school of humility and charity." These two graces are so precious to the soul, that they would be sufficient in themselves to complete the praise which may be made of the services rendered to the sick; but we may say, without fear of being deceived, that sickness is the school of all graces. How many occasions, for instance, of practising gentleness, patience, submission to the will of GOD, mortification, complete and absolute self-denial! Sufferings of mind and body, watchings, fatigue, anxieties, the repugnances of nature which is unceasingly opposed, the sometimes capricious exactions of the sick person, his ill-temper;—everything, in a word, unites to make this work of charity an habitual exercise of the most difficult virtues. What more useful penance than this, since it has charity for its principle, and its object and end is the comfort of CHRIST's suffering members and the glory of GOD! Happy are those persons who know how to profit by these occasions! A week passed in these laborious occupations is richer in fruits of virtue than many months of a calm and quiet life.

3. Still this is not all: abundant graces are connected with the ministry. These graces are secured to you through the gratitude of those souls whom you will have been the means of introducing into heaven, or whom you have helped to enter there; could they in their abode of glory, enjoying infinite happiness, forget the person to whom they owe their eternal

felicity? Such a thought is repugnant to the idea that faith gives us of the charity which animates them, and of the close communication which exists between the Church in heaven and the Church on earth. You will then have so many intercessors with GOD as you have succoured sinners in their death. And if some of them have not responded to your efforts—if, notwithstanding your cares and prayers, they died at enmity with GOD, the Master infinitely good and just for Whom you have laboured, will not suffer your efforts to lose their reward. And the desires of your heart, ineffectual for those miserable creatures who have despised the offers of grace, will not be so for you. JESUS CHRIST Himself will reward you. For, since He looks upon what is done for the least of His members as if it were done to Himself, how can He be insensible to this most difficult, most heroic, and most excellent of all the works of charity?

4. What shall we now say of the numerous privileges which form the precious appanage of this work of charity? If giving alms to the indigent, comforting the afflicted, visiting the prisoners, are works so pleasing to GOD, how does He regard the services rendered to the sick and dying poor? If sowing the seeds of virtue in the hearts of the young is so meritorious a work, what will it be to secure its fruits for eternity? And if each one of the works of mercy, both corporal and spiritual, considered by itself, is of so great a merit in the eyes of the LORD, who can rightly estimate

the admirable work which includes them all, and which practises them all at once in an especial and sublime manner ! Oh ! how beautiful will be your crown, you, whose every moment is marked by some act of charity, and who every day spend your strength, your health, and sometimes risk your life in the service of the sick ! Do not envy the fate of those courageous victims of mortification, who give up their bodies to the rigors of penitence, and voluntarily condemn themselves to the practice of a humble and austere life. If you know how to profit by the opportunities afforded to you by your vocation, you will certainly find sufficient to satisfy your thirst for mortification ; and the motive of charity which animates you will only communicate a new merit to your privations, and increase your own courage and devotion.

5. But if these blessings are so abundant in this life, how much more at the hour of death ! Then especially you will experience the happy effects of the protection of those souls to whom you have yourself lent loving assistance. I think I see them round your bed of sickness, assisting you by their prayers, protecting you from the attacks of the devil, comforting you in your troubles as you had comforted them. It is not possible that these souls can forget or forsake you ; I had almost said that it was not possible that you should not die well, having so many powerful protectors in heaven interested in your behalf. And the Divine Master, Whose members you have com-

forted, assisted, and consoled,—will He forsake you in your last hour? You have given Him in the persons of His faithful servants an eternal happiness and glory, and can He cast you away in the hour of your affliction? “No,” saith the prophet, for “*Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy : the LORD shall deliver him in the time of trouble.*” Who is the poor beyond others? What is the extremest need, but that of a sick man in a state of sin? And what is the *time of trouble*, the terrible day in which we need to be delivered, but the day of our death, and the moment when our eternal fate is decided? This is not enough for the LORD: He will take care of you in your sickness, He will soften its rigour by the unction of His grace and the solid consolations of hope. Of all the favours which GOD can grant us in this world, the greatest is that of a good death: now there are few more infallible methods, it appears, of securing this grace, than that of procuring it for others so far as we can. To assist the dying, therefore, is to work out our own salvation in the most effectual manner; it is to lay up for ourselves the most precious consolation for our last hour; it is to secure, in a manner, a blessed eternity to our own soul: can more be said in favour of this work?

6. Remember also that the blessings of glory will be united to the blessings of grace. Every one knows the words which the SAVIOUR of the world will address to His elect at the day of Judgment. Indeed, so

great is the value of charity in the eyes of the Supreme Judge—so great is its share in the work of our salvation that, forgetting, so to speak, all the other precepts, when He renders to each his due, JESUS CHRIST pronounces sentence with reference to that only which He calls *His* Commandment; He also appears to sum it up entirely in the love of our neighbour as the essential condition, the infallible mark, and the unequivocal token of Him Who is our GOD! “I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me.” Meditate on these comforting words, you who every day fulfil these duties of Christian charity towards the sick! Meditate upon them frequently, for it is for your sakes especially that they are written; it is you whom they particularly concern; you will one day have the greatest right to hear them pronounced. If the cup of cold water given to the poor for the love of CHRIST will in no wise lose its reward, what will be the reward of the painful care lavished day and night on the sick poor, and that every day, and during your whole life?

## 7. CONCLUSION.

On the consideration of such just and numerous advantages, I am no longer astonished at the zeal which has been shown by all saints for this work of mercy. I can no longer be surprised at the preeminence

they have given to it before all the others; I am no longer surprised to see in the Church of the God of Love so great a number of religious orders and communities dedicated exclusively to this kind of ministry. That S. Louis, king of France, frequently visited the sick, and that, not content with supplying their need out of his treasures, he desired to serve them with his own hands; that S. Elizabeth of Hungary, showed hospitality to lepers, and yielding to the inspiration of her faith, kissed their hands and feet; that S. Stephen, king of Hungary, humbled himself even to wash the feet of the poor, and visiting the hospitals by night that he might not be recognised, took pleasure in waiting upon the sick himself; that S. Hedwig, a queen, on her knees rendered the same service to the poor, and, far from being repulsed by their sores, took delight in washing and kissing the feet of lepers:—I can understand it: I admire these great and good actions, but I cannot be astonished at them. These examples have been so common in the Church, that it is in vain that we undertake to quote them all. In the highest ranks of society, we see S. Bridget occupied in serving the poor, and especially the sick, whose hands and feet she kissed; S. Elizabeth, queen of Portugal; S. Margaret, queen of Scotland, herself serving every day, as the meanest servant, three hundred poor whom she nourished, washing their feet with her own hands. What shall we say of S. Joseph of Calasantio, carrying the dead upon his shoulders to

their place of burial ; of S. Camillus de Lellis, founder of the congregation of Clerks Regular, consecrated to the service of the sick, who retired into a hospital, made himself the servant of the patients, and began by the practice of the lowest and most humiliating offices, the institution of this order? It was the same mind which animated S. Jerome Emilius, and him whom France honours as her greatest glory—S. Vincent de Paul, who became, so to speak, the father of all the unfortunate, and who only presents himself to our thoughts as the personification of Christian charity. This was the spirit that animated so many thousands of holy priests and religious who died in the service of the plague-stricken. Has not JESUS CHRIST Himself taught us that He looks on what is done for the meanest of His servants as done unto Himself? Does not the faith tell us that, member of the mystical body of our SAVIOUR, the cause of our neighbour cannot be separated from that of JESUS CHRIST, and that by serving the members we truly serve the Head? And do we not know that, in the days of His mortal life, He who was called the Son of Man, our Brother and our Friend, took delight in alleviating the sufferings of His brethren ; that one of His most ordinary occupations, even at the time of His preaching, was visiting the sick, and it was for their benefit that He wrought the greater part of His miracles? Did He not bequeath this precious ministry, which was so dear to Himself, to his disciples and apostles, destined

to survive Him in the divine works of His charity? "Into whatsoever city ye enter," He said to them, "heal the Sick that are therein." With such examples, in the presence of the SON of GOD Who Himself has vouchsafed to be our model, can we doubt the excellence of this ministry? Can we listen to the repugnance of nature? Can we be discouraged by the difficulties which it presents, and not rush forward full of joy, hope, and love, in the way of the saints and the steps of the SAVIOUR? It was always thus in bygone ages—the history of the Church proves it. It will always be so in future ages, and till the end of the world; His SPIRIT gives us the pledge and assurance of it. If in all times some luxurious and timid Christians are found who blush to perform offices so noble to the eye of faith, and who hesitate at recognizing in the poor and sick their own brother, their own flesh, so to speak,—and, far more, JESUS CHRIST, their SAVIOUR and their GOD; in all times there will also be found courageous and intrepid Christians who will deem it an honour to their faith and to themselves to imitate a GOD-Man, to serve Him in His members; and they will willingly sacrifice their life after the example of so many victims of charity, for the consolation of their brethren and the acquisition of heaven.



## CHAPTER IV.

*Of the dispositions with which we must discharge this Office.*

1. *Our estimation of these offices.*—The disposition that is most essential, (for if it exists it will necessarily produce all the others,) is an exalted idea of the greatness of this ministry, of the numerous difficulties which it presents, and the infinite consequences arising from the manner in which it is fulfilled. We must look upon ourselves as charged to provide for the salvation of the sick person whom we are assisting, and act towards him as if GOD Himself, Who is His FATHER, had confided him to our trust and to our care. It is not enough, however, to understand these truths, we must often meditate upon them, frequently make them a subject of prayer, and imbue ourselves deeply with them. The first three chapters of this little work will furnish abundant matter for these reflections.

2. *The spirit of faith.*—But the most efficacious of all the means for understanding and appreciating these truths is to consider them with the eye of faith. Yes, faith (only a lively and real faith,) is the light which should illuminate and guide those who give themselves up to this employment. The greater this faith, the

easier it will be to fulfil these painful offices with devotion. This faith will open their eyes to the dignity of the sick person. It will see in him the child of GOD, the inheritor of heaven, a creature made in the image of the Holy Trinity, redeemed with the price of the Blood of JESUS CHRIST, destined to praise and glorify its Creator and Saviour to all eternity.\* In this body, disfigured by sickness and suffering, it will discover the temple of the HOLY GHOST—the member of CHRIST—flesh of his flesh, so to speak, and bone of His bone. On this hideous and repulsive form the SAVIOUR will one day cause the light of His glory to shine, and will raise it up again in the likeness of His glorified Body. Those dull eyes are destined to contemplate the LORD JESUS for ever in the heavenly Jerusalem : that mouth, whence painful groans are wrung by pain, will resound the shout of joy and love through all eternity ; that pale and haggard face will become more shining than the sun, and will reflect the rays of divine beauty ; that soul, withered by suffering, weighed down, and, as it were, crushed

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\* The story is well known of the surgeon in some Parisian hospital, who, in going through a ward with a brother physician, recommended some unusual operation on the patient by whose bedside they were standing, and finished by the quotation—“*Fiat experimentum in corpore vili :*” (Let the experiment be tried on a vile body.) The poor man understood Latin, and replied—“*Corpus non tam vile, pro quo Christus non dedignatus est mori :*” (That body is not so vile for which CHRIST disdained not to die.)—ED.

under the weight of a body which is falling into dissolution, as under the ruins of a crumbling house, will soon be free and released from its fetters, will soon go to the bosom of its GOD, to taste there a joy as pure as it is lasting, and to render to that GOD the glory and worship due to His sovereign majesty.

This is the faith that will make you appreciate the misery of the soul in a state of mortal sin, and will produce in your heart that feeling of compassion which the sight of the most extreme wretchedness, united to the most terrible danger, naturally inspires.

Look attentively at that soul, sealed in holy baptism with the character of the children of GOD. You will see there the disfigured traces of its primitive greatness, and the degenerate marks of its divine origin, and you will weep over its misery as JESUS CHRIST wept over Jerusalem. Not content with bewailing it, you will stretch out a helping hand, and you will seek to heal its evils as great as they are to itself imperceptible. This is the duty of her who is charged with the care of the sick and with assisting them to die.

3. *Zeal.*—Faith also will exert its zeal by showing to her on one side heaven, and on the other hell, both eternal. For there is no middle state, and every man is reduced to this alternative; but for the sick man, the obligation of choice is imminent, and the moment of fixing his fate for ever has arrived.

It is evident that similar thoughts may act powerfully on a Christian heart, and those who place them-

selves under the influence of these truths must receive great encouragement from them to undertake and venture everything for the interest of the soul. From this pure and sacred source the inspiration of zeal should be derived : and what may it not accomplish when it is pure and sincere ? How many sick persons are snatched from eternal misery by the zeal of those who assisted them ? How many others will be doomed to eternal punishment, whom charitable pains would have arrested on the brink of the abyss ? Zeal—enlightened, prudent, industrious—which strains every nerve to accomplish its end ; *courageous*, which nothing disheartens, which no obstacle can disconcert ; *constant*, which triumphs over difficulties by the all-powerful strength of a persevering will, which says to itself—*I must procure the eternal salvation of this soul ; it must be done at all costs : patient* zeal which knows, when it is necessary, how to wait for the moments of grace, and which, repulsed a hundred times, always returns to the charge by choosing the favourable instant.

If the devil, in the last moments of man, makes so many efforts to obtain his soul and consummate his misery, is it not right that we should use every power to protect and save it ?

But mistake not : this pure and sincere zeal can only be the fruit of grace : it presupposes supernatural motives and can only be inspired by faith. It cannot therefore be met with in those persons who only

seek a material gain in the service of the sick, and who are only actuated by worldly motives. The ties of blood and friendship, however strong they may be, will not suffice to produce in us this ardent thirst for the salvation of souls; the natural love, however lawful, which we bear to our relatives and friends is of an inferior order—it must be ennobled and consecrated by divine love: it is in grace and not in nature that the Christian must seek for the principle of his action.

4. *Courage*.—It is useless to say that those who are destined to fulfil stern offices must arm themselves with courage to overcome natural repugnance and to pass through any fatigue. We all know that they have need of patience that will endure all trials, and unalterable gentleness. Each day fresh occasions will offer themselves for the exercise of those virtues, so dear to the heart of JESUS CHRIST, and so advantageous both for those who practise and those who are the object of them. The sick person already suffers enough without adding to his pain; had he merited it a thousand times, he must be spared this addition to his suffering.

5. *Prayer*.—We must not forget another disposition quite as essential, and that is *prayer*. One has only to know the first elements of religion to be aware that grace is absolutely necessary for the conversion and salvation of souls; that without it, man would act in vain, and that all good comes from above. It

is no less certain that this grace is promised to prayer, which is, as it were, its essential condition. Therefore, the first thing that should be done by a person who undertakes to wait on or to assist a sick man, is to recommend him to God, and to pray both for the health of his body, should that be for his advantage, and for that—more important still—of his soul. For the condition of the soul is often more deplorable than that of the body, however overwhelmed the latter may be by the weight of its infirmities.

Whoever would convince themselves of the importance which the Church attaches to prayer in the last moments of a Christian, has only to cast one glance over the long and varied formulas of prayers and supplications which she puts in the mouths of her Ministers and children, and which she desires them to recite for the sick. We see that in her eyes there are no circumstances more critical—no moment in which it is more necessary to come to the help of human weakness. We can also understand what is her confidence in this means, and how much she thinks of its efficiency in repelling the devil, in strengthening the sick man, and obtaining for him the graces of which he has such pressing need. The person who is charged with assisting him, ought to enter into the feelings of the Church and come with confidence to this all-powerful weapon. To pray instantly for the sick man, is ordinarily, we repeat, the most efficacious means; it is the easiest and most attainable method for every one

to comfort him in his corporal and spiritual misfortunes; it is therefore the first duty of the person who waits upon him; she must use it constantly, and every day she will offer to the LORD fervent prayers with this intention. [*See the Prayers at the end of this book.*]

6. *State of grace.*—Is it necessary to remind those persons who give themselves up to these offices—not less painful than they are sublime—that they can do nothing thankworthy in the sight of GOD without being in a state of grace? If the sick man without this disposition cannot profit by his sickness, how can his attendant, without the same condition, acquire from her work of charity the numerous graces which are attached to it? For her, who is living a life of grace, all her steps, all her actions, all her words, all her troubles are laying up a crown; she will receive the reward of the least act done on the principle of charity. What will then be the remuneration of the fatigues and the prolonged watchings to which she condemns herself—the multiplied privations which she accepts—the repugnance of nature which she overcomes—even the danger to which she exposes herself? But if she be in a state of mortal sin, all is borne in vain. What a loss in the eyes of faith! what a powerful motive to return to the friendship of GOD, for any one who may have the unhappiness of being at enmity with Him! You who are not discouraged by the many troubles attached to the sick poor, or who, in your own families, are waiting on a sick relation, do not

allow yourselves thus to lose the fruit of your fatigue and anxiety. Hasten to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, and there acquire the pardon you need. You will thence gain an infinity of graces; your troubles will become sweeter, and God will bless the care you bestow on His children. Who can tell the consolation and the grace which you will acquire in these practices; and how much, in sanctifying yourselves, they will be useful to the sick whom you serve, and other persons in the house? For it is necessary so to act in visiting the sick, and in the cares bestowed upon them, that as we comfort them we may profit ourselves.



CHAPTER V.

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*Of the faults which we must guard against in attendance upon the Sick.*

IF it is important to acquire the dispositions of which we have just spoken, it is not less so to avoid the faults which we are about to point out, and against which we have every need to be watchful.

It may be easily conceived that the service of the sick is always painful to nature: it sometimes becomes excessively difficult and laborious, whether on account of the sickness which repels and increases our natural repugnance, and exacts further care, constant self-denial, and expenditure of labour; or whether on account of the sick man, whose coarseness, ingratitude, or stupidity, seem capable sometimes of cooling the most ardent zeal and the most active charity. Very often, alas, his impatience, his bad temper, his rudeness are apt to discourage us. With the best will in the world, we are tempted to reply harshly to exactions which are not only unjust, but sometimes even ridiculous. It may also happen that to all these causes of dislike may be joined another not less powerful; and that the consideration of the vices of a

person may inspire us with a contempt and estrangement which it is difficult to reconcile with the anxious care which the condition of a sick person requires.

Let those who have charge of this poor sick person take good heed that this feeling of contempt and aversion does not enter their heart. *True charity*, remember, *inspires compassion and not disdain* : these are the words of a holy father. Should not that sick person who is afflicted with the union of several complicated illnesses excite your pity in a higher degree, and should not your cares be all the more earnestly bestowed as he appears to be in danger ? The faults—it may be vices—of the sick man, if they increase his misery, ought they not in the same proportion to excite your love ?

Take heed that your zeal is not cooled, nor your charity extinguished, by the ingratitude with which your services may be repaid : the less you receive from men, the more you may expect from God. Your devotion will be only more sincere, more supernatural and more meritorious ; you will be less in danger of acting from human views and natural motives, and the treasure you are laying up for yourselves, placed entirely in the Hands of God, will be better protected from that secret self-complacency, which, like a gnawing worm, stains and corrupts our best actions.

Take heed lest you lose sight of the soul in your care for the body ; and lest, restricting your cares and pretensions to corporal health and temporal life,

your actions are left in the deplorable condition of purely natural works, and do not rise to the elevation of the grace and dignity of the Christian. Habit, if we do not take care, will almost invincibly lead us to submit to the law of nature, and tends continually to withdraw us from the dominion of faith: negligence insensibly succeeds to zeal. Soon we shall only see the man where we ought to see the Christian, and we end by beholding only a body in a state of dissolution, where faith ought above all to discover an immortal soul, created in the image of God and redeemed by the Blood of the SAVIOUR.

Take heed, finally, that your impatience, your ill-temper, your hardness, do not rob you of a large share of your reward, at the same time that they take from you a portion of the influence which you might exercise for the good of souls, if you knew how to win them by gentleness and cordial love. If this charity ought to be practised towards all men, with regard to the sick it should clothe itself in all its loveliness, and display all its brightness and rare beauty.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Of the dangers we may meet with in the service of the Sick, and of the precautions by which we may guard against them.*

The dangers incurred in the service of the sick may respect the body or threaten directly the soul.

ART. I.—*Dangers which concern Health, and precautions against them.*

1. However serious the sickness—however dear the person whom we tend—we must not allow ourselves to be carried to excess, as regards our own health; to prolong indiscreetly our watching and our abstinence, and by relieving the sick to become so ourselves. There are persons who, on these occasions, listening only to the voice of their imagination and the exaggerated feelings of natural tenderness, are carried to real excess without any other result than that of exhausting their strength. Faith and reason must be allowed to bear sway: while we trust in God, we must give our own bodies necessary relief: never are substantial nourishment and sufficient rest more needed.

2. If it is to be feared that the sickness is, or may

become, contagious, we should carefully learn from the physician what precautions should be taken, that we may not needlessly subject ourselves or expose others to the danger of contagion.

3. The sickness, without being infectious, may be of a nature to produce hurtful impressions upon children, or those of weak imaginations and delicate organizations; as with epilepsy, frenzy, &c. It is then necessary, as much as possible, to keep such persons away from the sick man.

4. Those persons who attend upon the sick may injure their health by breathing an infected and unwholesome air; it is important, as much for him as for those who attend upon him, to purify the air of the apartment in which he is, and to keep up a constant circulation. This may easily be done in warm weather; and it is not more difficult in winter, for it will be enough to leave the window open for a few moments, taking precaution that the sick man is not exposed to any draught during the time. The chimney, too, keeps up a perpetual current of air, and thus promotes change of the atmosphere which is breathed in the room.

When the bed of a sick person is made, arranged, or uncovered, the nurse must avoid, as much as possible, the breathing the exhalations which arise from the bed. She must also avoid taking the corrupt breath of the sick person, especially if he is afflicted with disease of the lungs.

5. Those persons who attend upon the sick ought also to take care not to touch the perspiration which comes from their body : it is prudent not immediately to touch the sick person—that is to say, touch his linen, not his skin. If it is necessary to touch him when in a perspiration, it will be well to wash the hands after having done so.

6. It is better that the meals should be taken in another room.

7. As to the linen used by him, in certain sicknesses it should only be used with discretion, even after it has been washed. It is well to consult the physician upon this point, and learn from him what precautions to take, and what means to use to prevent or avert the danger. Complaints of the skin and chest are easily communicated in consequence of imprudence in this matter.

## ART. II.—*Dangers concerning the Soul, and precautions against them.*

Those who have charge of the sick are exposed to certain peculiar dangers which regard the soul. Besides the temptations which we have pointed out above, they may easily fall into faults more or less serious, and to avoid these they have need of great watchfulness.

Thus: 1. In hospitals and in attendance upon all sick persons, it is necessary to exercise a strict surveillance over those who are employed to attend upon

or watch by them. They should be persons of a certain age—of a virtue beyond the reach of all suspicion—of exemplary piety, and who should be taught how to assist the sick in the hour of death. These cases devolve upon the conscience of the Superior, who cannot devote too much attention and diligence to them.

2. Those persons who assist the sick in their own homes, have need of still more care against the still greater dangers which await them. As much as possible they should not watch alone. They must be on their guard against bad company, dangerous conversations, or reading doubtful books.

3. In general those persons who attend upon the sick are exposed to neglect their spiritual exercises: either by fatigue or preoccupation, they do not even find time to say their prayers: from this a kind of languor takes possession of the soul—motives of faith are forgotten—supernatural light is obscured, and they soon act only in a natural and general manner.

## CHAPTER VII.

*Methods of sanctification for those persons who assist the Sick.*

1. Those persons who attend upon the sick, should seek in the LORD that strength and consolation which they need in this painful occupation. Besides their morning and evening prayers, which should never be omitted, they should often have recourse to God during the day by ejaculatory prayers,\* which at the same time will be very useful in restoring their courage and renewing their intention.

2. They must often pray for the sick person, and recommend to God the welfare of his soul and body. Nothing is more likely to develope in them the principles of the charity which they exercise, and make them endure patiently the hardships attendant on their estate.

3. They must always have some good book with them, such as "The Little Hours of the Passion," "*The Imitation of Christ*," "*The Paradise of the Christian Soul*," or some book of the kind, which

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\* See some of those at the end, which may be used for or with the sick person.



may serve both for themselves and the sick person who is well enough to be read to for a few minutes without fatigue.

4. It will be very useful to meditate from time to time on the earthly sufferings, and especially the Passion, of our LORD.

5. The principal means of sustaining and fortifying the soul is to receive Holy Communion whenever an opportunity may offer. Looking upon herself as appointed to guide a soul into heaven, the nurse should endeavour, by the holiness of her own life, to assure for herself a happy death, the earnest of a glorious eternity.

After having considered the dispositions in which those persons who assist the sick should endeavour to live, and the graces after which they should strive, in order to sanctify themselves for this employment, I will now point out their duties with regard to the sick, the nature of the care which they ought to bestow, and the method to be followed to enable them to profit by their sickness, and to prepare them to die well.

## SECOND PART.

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OF THE RIGHT METHOD TO ATTEND UPON THE  
SICK, AND THE MANNER OF PREPARING  
THEM TO DIE WELL.

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### CHAPTER I.

*Of the different subjects of which we must acquire  
a knowledge when we take care of the Sick.*

ART. I. *Of the knowledge they should acquire touching  
the Sick Person.*

This knowledge is of the greatest importance: without it, we should guide every one in the same manner; we should act uncertainly in an affair of the greatest consequence; we should use the same language to the pious person and the public sinner; we should treat in the same manner the timid soul, already too fearful of GOD's judgments, and the presumptuous soul, hardened in crime. The child and the old man, the poor artizan, the rich merchant, the ignorant man, and he who is perfectly acquainted with religion and its duties, will be placed on the same footing. Age,

estate, condition, character, disposition, all will be confounded; while, on the contrary, all should be carefully distinguished as especial guidance, and separate treatment.

Do you wish to advance prudently, and to secure the desired result to your patients?

Before all things, examine with whom you are engaged: that is to say, see who the sick person is.

1. Is it a child who has not yet made its first communion? Is he a young man, a person in the flower of his age, a married person, an old man?

2. Is he a poor person, of low estate, a servant, a workman, or a rich and well brought up person?

3. What is his character? Is he a person naturally calm, gentle, quiet, without quick passions; or on the contrary, quick, irascible, violent, and susceptible of great and strong passions?

4. What are his habitual dispositions with regard to virtue and religion? Has he any known vices, or evil habits; a constant distaste of the practices of religion, negligence in acquitting himself of his religious duties, and from want of instruction, doubts, errors in faith? Or, on the contrary, is he a virtuous person; one who frequents the Sacraments; well-instructed in the Christian doctrine?

5. Are there any special difficulties in the present circumstances, any particular troubles and temptations? (Separation between husband and wife, some occasion of sin, hatred, restitution, &c.)

6. Do the exterior relations of the sick man, the persons who surround him, his position, his occupations, oppose any obstacle to his reception of the Sacrament? (Bad companions, dangerous and evil occupations, &c )

7. In what sensible way may you hope to interest the sick person, what cord must you touch to move his heart and make him receive advice? Is it through his children, his wife, his friends, that we may hope to obtain an entrance into his heart? Has he known in his life, periods of innocence and happiness? Which of the Christian or moral virtues is most in accordance with his character and natural inclinations, and which may be laid hold of to lead him further on? (Compassion for the poor, generosity in forgiveness, trust, fear, the Passion of our LORD, &c.) You must sound his heart, and see on what point it will echo to the touch: it will be very useful also to question those who know the sick person, and to obtain from them, if possible, the knowledge that you stand in need of.

8. What are the outward means which may most usefully be put in practice? Interesting and instructive reading, edifying conversation, loving advice, friendly remonstrance, to inspire feelings of fear or confidence, interview with a Christian friend, an enlightened person, especially with the Priest.

You should strive to know and strengthen the weak side of each one, to put the balm which is most needed

on the different wounds of the heart, and suggest to the sick man those reflections which you would think most likely to awaken good feelings in your own heart, if you were in his place and in his disposition.

All this may appear difficult to do, we acknowledge; but if you cannot attain to perfection, you must nevertheless cease not to strive for it. You should come as near to the goal as you can, even should it be impossible for you to touch it. Finally, these details will at least make you see what an important ministry this is, and how much need there is to have recourse to prayer that you may not endanger such deep interests as those which are treated of here.

## ART. II. *Instruction upon Sickness: intercourse with Physician.*

You must not delay sending for a wise and conscientious physician; you should choose a religious man as much as possible. There are persons who hold back in consideration of the expense; let them be reminded that it is a duty to have recourse to a physician, and a sin to put it off so as to endanger the recovery of the sick person.

It is important to know the nature of the illness at first—its species, its seriousness, and its dangers; its particular characteristics, its ordinary alternatives for the better or worse; finally, its probable duration.

Those who are accustomed to tending on the sick acquire by habit and experience, a sort of knowledge

of their different points ; others have no other means than by asking the physician, whose judgment in such matters is almost always more to be depended on, because he takes notice of different symptoms which often escape the observation of persons less accustomed to this kind of ministry.

You should, therefore, always ask him if the sickness has any immediate danger. If it is generally mortal? How long it usually lasts? You should know also whether there is any fear of the sick person's becoming delirious, as it happens in most fevers ; as then you must not delay causing him to receive the Blessed Sacrament. If the sickness is contagious, and what precaution should be used under the circumstances ?

You should also learn what degree of care and attention the sick person requires, and if it is necessary to watch by him? Finally, you should have the most essential points of the treatment that is to be followed explained to you very clearly ; for example, what things you must absolutely avoid and refuse the sick man, and those which are rigorously necessary.

Every one who attends the sick, ought to make themselves capable, as far as possible, to give an account to the physician, when he comes, of the things it is most important he should be informed. You must therefore observe what there is remarkable in the sick man ; the circumstances in which the sick person suffers most, those in which he is better ; you

must tell him if he has taken the remedies prescribed, and what effect they have produced, &c. In a word, you must be ready to answer the different questions that a careful physician will not fail to ask, and observe for yourself whatever you think capable of enlightening his judgment upon the sickness.

If in what has happened before, or in the habitual conduct of the sick person, there are any indications which you think would be useful in helping the physician to know perfectly the character of the sickness, you must not fail to tell them to him.

You should never leave him alone with either the sick man or woman, but be ready to gather up all his observations, to answer all his questions, to receive his prescriptions, or to ask him to write down his prescription in order that you may observe them as faithfully as you can.

It would be useless to remark here that you can never be authorised to take any remedies forbidden by the law of God, and the direct and immediate effect of which would be in opposition to the sacred duties of conscience.

Many persons also have been urged to be careful of the custom too common in the country, of using all sorts of remedies on the faith of those who advise them to use these remedies as good for the sick person as they often are hurtful, would become dangerous from their multiplicity and the diversity of their effects.

It will not be difficult to learn from the physician,

when he is honest and religious, if it is urgent or not for the sick person to receive the last sacrament. But you must generally ask this information apart, and not before the sick person. Relatives ought to avoid showing, under these circumstances, too great a sensibility, for it will not fail sometimes to close the lips of the physician, and to cause him to dissimulate a truth, which it is always difficult to announce.

**ART. III. *Information which should be acquired from the Relations, or those persons who are about the Patient.***

When you tend sick persons in their own house, you must not neglect acquainting yourself with what concerns their family or their relatives, if you are not already sufficiently so. You will therefore enquire with discretion the state of their future and their wants, their religious feelings, the dispositions of those members of the family who have anything to do with the sick person.

You must examine carefully whether, among those who surround him, there is anyone who may be dangerous or hurtful to him, either on account of the unrestrained love which unites them to the sick man, or, on account of the enmity which exists between them, or because of irreligious feelings which might induce them to hinder the dying man from receiving the sacraments, and right preparing for death. If you discover anything of this kind, you



will omit nothing that you can do prudently to keep these dangerous persons at a distance, and you should communicate for this object either with the priest, or with the other members of the family, or even with the physician, if he is religious.

#### ART. IV. *Intercourse with the Priest.*

One of the most important points, we might say, the most important to all, is to give speedy warning to the sick man's clergyman; to keep him conversant with the sickness and its progress, to acquaint him with the danger, should it exist, and to tell him the judgment of the physician.

Avoid giving alarm without occasion to a priest who may have many other occupations; but remember that it is still more dangerous to defer warning him too long, and thus to endanger the sick man's dying without receiving the last rites of the Church, or not receiving them until after he has lost consciousness, and consequently with dispositions anything but satisfactory. Pastors of souls feel no pain so acute as that of seeing any one of their parishioners deprived, by the fault or negligence of the relatives, or of those who tend him, of the help of these last rites, and they will readily excuse the fear which prompts to exaggerate the sick person's danger.

To obviate, as far as possible, both these difficulties, you will consult the physician; and not satisfied with knowing what he thinks of the present state of the

sick person, you will question him on the symptoms by which the aggravation of the disease is known, and which render providing for the wants of the soul, urgent.

It will be useful also to acquaint the priest, according to the circumstances and necessity, of the disposition of the sick person, his moral condition and troubles, as well as the difficulties which might impede his own ministration: for example, of the hatred which may exist, of the restrictions which may have to be made, of the scandal which may have been given by a notorious sinner, and which must be repaired, of the occasion of sin which may still exist, of those persons in the house who may be hurtful to the sick person, &c.

In short, whatever may assist the judgment or the conduct of the priest, whatever may be useful to him in his intercourse with the sick person or his relations, whatever may contribute to the spiritual good of either and the general edification, will be advantageously communicated to him, who, in his capacity of physician to the soul, ought to exercise so salutary and powerful an influence over the eternal fate of the sick person, but whose conduct ought to be prudent and wise in his ministrations, since he is the dispenser of good gifts and not the master.

It is not sufficient to keep the priest well informed of whatever he ought to know, and to warn him betimes when it is necessary to administer to the sick

man for the first time ; but if the sickness is lingering, you must frequently send him information, and make it your business to let him know, as often as possible, the progress of the disease and the condition of the sick person.

If it is the duty of those who tend the dying, to give the priest the necessary information ; it is not less important that they should ask him what line of conduct they should themselves follow under the circumstances, and to learn from him what they can do for the advantage of the patient, and what they should carefully avoid. They will learn the imminence of the danger, the manner to prepare the sick man for death, and ask him if he wishes to be again sent for. This you must not fail to do when you can conveniently, and which you must never omit doing, when you think it is necessary for the dying man.

You must also communicate with the priest regarding any temporal help which your patients may need, and those persons to whom you may apply for it.

## CHAPTER 11.

*Of the care which should be given to the Body.*

The first object of the care which should be given to the patient is the body, the relief of which it is necessary as far as possible to procure. Although the health of the soul is infinitely more precious and more important, you must begin by taking care of the body, both because suffering oppresses the soul, and makes all its efforts much more difficult, and because by these means you gain the confidence of the sick person who, generally, is more touched by the care you take to procure him any bodily relief, than by what you do for the benefit of his soul.

Thus : 1. You must fulfil, with much exactness, the prescriptions of the physician, and neglect nothing to procure for the sick person the appointed remedies : take care that these remedies are well prepared, administered at the right time, and served in such a way that he may take them without repugnance. You will take care to keep them from spoiling, or not to use them if they are spoilt ; nothing more disgusts a sick person than a want of neatness, and nothing does him so much injury as the bad quality of the remedies.

2. You must take care not to exceed the prescription of the physician, especially regarding the quantity of the food which they allow the patients, and the quality of the drinks appointed by them. It is necessary in this respect to use great reserve, and sometimes a holy cruelty, both during the sickness, and also during the time of convalescence. To yield to the desires of a poor patient tormented with hunger, would be to expose him to great danger and perhaps to contribute to his death. You would be guilty in this weakness, not only of imprudence, but often of sin. You must also exercise a wise surveillance over those patients who are susceptible of listening to reason, and also over those who come to see him, and who may yield to his wishes. It is very useful also to settle with the physician the hours of his meals.

3. One of the things which most contributes to the comfort of patients, is cleanliness. You must, therefore, as much as possible, change the linen, air the room they occupy, taking care not to expose them so as to check the perspiration ; leave nothing standing in the room from the night, sweep the room every day, leave nothing there which might taint the air, make the bed, and if they are able, get them up for some time ; they will rest much better afterwards. You must, nevertheless, use great precaution in this with respect to certain diseases, and it is safer to do nothing without the advice of the physician, when the illness is serious.

4. It is necessary to use great gentleness and kindness with the sick; you must know how to bear or pass over their ill-temper, and wait for the right time to make those remarks to them about it which ought to be made. When your patient calls you, you must not keep him waiting; if you cannot give him what he wants, you must soften the refusal; carefully avoid, for the interest of his soul and body, everything that may make him unhappy, impatient, or annoyed: nothing more effectually increases physical disease than mental troubles.

5. You will give additional price to the services which you render to the sick, by accompanying them with gentle manners and that kind attention which make such a strong impression on their hearts. You will soften their sufferings by sitting with them, and sympathizing with their sorrows, and seeking to draw them away from them, to console and cheer them. These marks of affection and interest will prepare the way to the spiritual good which you desire to do them, and will give you an access to their hearts.

6. In general, you must avoid thwarting a sick person, even though he be unreasonable, or even delirious. If it be necessary to use force and constraint to hold the patient in bed, you should take precautions to do so without hurting him—for example, confining his limbs with the sheets in such a way as not to injure them, and seeking to calm him by gentleness, rather than repressing his efforts by violence.

7. You should avoid speaking too loudly in the sick-room ; you must speak to the patient himself in a soft voice, at least unless it is necessary to do otherwise to make him hear. You must also take care to keep him away from rooms that are too noisy, that might interrupt his sleep, or disturb him. Too much cheerfulness in the presence of the sick person who is suffering much, would be wrong and almost cruel ; the room of sorrow is not the best place for high spirits and rejoicing.

8. You must take care that the patient does not receive too many visits, especially when he is most tired : and if he is very much exhausted, he should not receive any. You must be careful that these visits are short : and that they do no harm, you must be watchful that his friends do not speak about things that would disquiet or irritate him, or in too loud a voice.

9. If the patient be poor, you should endeavour to procure him necessary help ; and if you cannot yourself assist him sufficiently, you should apply to those charitable persons from whom you may reasonably expect some alms. You should have recourse to those confraternities which would most easily assist you ; but before all, you should inform the priest. [Would that this advice could be given with any prospect of utility in England!]

Alms given to the sick poor are well bestowed. How efficacious are they to obtain an entrance into

their hearts, and how easy it is to insinuate those feelings which ought to animate them, when you have convinced them by works more than by words, that you love them, and that you sincerely desire their happiness. It is then, above all, that one can, if one may so express it, *buy souls*, and buy them cheaply.



CHAPTER III.

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*Of the care of the Soul, and the means that must be used that the Sick Person profit by his Sickness.*

ART. I. *Things that you must observe relative to the Patient's room.*

You might well place in the room, and before the eyes of the patient, pictures of Our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, especially in His Passion. The poor, particularly children, are wonderfully affected by such help to devotion.

Nevertheless in this, as in all things else, you must have regard to the present disposition of the patient, and not endanger the good you hope to do him, by abruptly putting these pious practices before persons hitherto strangers, and, perhaps, opposed to them.

Take out of the room all objects that may awaken any dangerous passion in the soul of the patient, such as foolish and improper pictures. You must still more carefully keep away those persons who, in whatever way, have been the occasion of sin to the sick man, or may become so. It is always right, and sometimes it is necessary that these persons should go out of the house. You should not even allow them to visit the

sick man, and this is a point of great importance in hospitals and elsewhere; you must therefore carefully watch over those persons who ask to see him, and if you suspect them, refuse them.

**ART. II.** *Of what should be avoided in speaking to the Sick Person.*

You should avoid recalling to the sick person those for whom he has any hatred, or, on the contrary, any unholy affection. If it is necessary to speak to him about them, you must do it with precaution, so as not to expose him to sin. You would consequently abstain from enquiring in his presence of those who have injured him in his property, his reputation, or his person, and who may have contributed to his illness. If he himself begins a conversation on this subject, you should try to turn him gently to something else.

Neither must you, without necessity, talk to him about his children or his temporal affairs. The least inconvenience on such subjects would be to distract the sick man from more useful thought; they might easily re-awaken slumbering passions, or at least throw him into danger.

In speaking to the sick man, you must avoid all that may fatigue him, or disturb his mind. It is, therefore, well to use simple language and ordinary expressions. You would also do well in speaking to the lower orders, to use such language as they can understand.

**ART. III. *How the Patient must be taught to accept his sickness with resignation.***

The conduct of the patient during his illness, and the benefits he may derive from it, depend almost entirely on the way in which he regards it, and the disposition in which he receives it. There is, therefore, nothing more important than to make him understand its advantages, and to dispose him to endure its severity in a spirit of faith. For this, two things are principally necessary: to persuade him of the utility of the sickness, and the numerous benefits he may derive from it; to disperse the different pretexts that are used to obscure thoughts of faith, and to keep up the repugnance of nature.

Let us see first what should be suggested to the sick person to dispose him to accept his sickness with resignation. It is a remark that you must always remember in tending the sick: it is of the highest importance, but its application is more or less difficult. Do you wish to suggest to your patients those feelings which enter into their hearts, and produce upon them the effect you desire? You must know how to divine their disposition; take them as they are; identify yourself in some sort with them. Appreciation of their interior condition will make you know what you may easily suggest to them in each circumstance.

Their resignation or their natural repugnance, their fear or their trust will put you in the right way, and setting out from the place where you find them, you

may insensibly lead them to that to which you wish to lead them. This principle of conduct is fundamental in this matter, as in many others.

Here are some reflections which you may read to the sick person to bring him to resignation.

1. **Sickness** is the necessary consequence of our nature, and the union of the soul with the body tainted with original or natural sin; no one is exempt from the sad necessity of suffering. It would avail me nothing to give way to grief and impatience. I should thus only aggravate the sickness of the body, and add to it a still more dreadful sickness—that of the soul. We are all subject to this law; hard indeed for man, but at the same time very salutary. The rich and powerful of the world are not exempt from it; kings must submit to it as well as their subjects. The Saints themselves have been sick, suffered, and died. What do I say? The Saviour of the world, the Son of God our Lord, to sanctify our sufferings and our death, has willed to taste it in all its bitterness. O my God! I will not complain with such examples before my eyes. Thou art my Master; it is not Thy servant for whom Thou desirest death, but for sin. Yes, it is sin that Thou wouldst destroy in me. Thou art my Father, and if Thou permittest me to suffer here, it is to purify me from my faults and to make me worthy of Thy kingdom, where nothing that is defiled can enter; Lord, give me patience. O my Saviour, I would unite my sufferings to those which Thou hast

endured; fortify my courage, and since I belong to Thee, having been purchased with the price of Thy precious blood, do not forsake me. He who feareth God, saith the HOLY SPIRIT, should not fear death, because it is for him a source of happiness.

2. Sickness, in the designs of God, ought to be efficacious in assuring our eternal happiness. O that this motive were all-powerful to make us receive it in love! Upon what does our eternal fate depend? In the manner in which we die, and our disposition at that decisive moment. Now, what is more efficacious than sickness to help us to prepare for it? Could God give us a stronger proof of His desire, that we should not be lost, but saved? He is not content with warning us in His Holy Gospel to be always ready; but, as if He feared to take us unawares, He generally sends sickness beforehand, to announce to us the near approach of death, and to prepare us for it. Yet once more, how wonderful is this grace! since it is uncertainty which, more than anything else, makes death terrible; and the greatest favour that God can give us, is lovingly to warn us that we may not be taken by surprise, and that we may have time to prepare. Thus then, my life is in Thy hands: some days of suffering may insure me a happy eternity. I have only to will, and heaven is mine. Nothing can hinder my gaining it, since God offers it to me, and gives me both the time and the means of assuring to myself its possession by asking pardon for my sins.

**ART. IV. *How to overcome the pretext which would hinder our receiving Sickness with resignation.***

It is understood that, in what we are about to say, the habitual dispositions of the sick person must be studied; you must take him at that point where you find him, and lead him on to the desired degree of perfection; you will have recourse sometimes with advantage to purely human motives to introduce little by little something more perfect. Often also you would exert yourself more effectually for the benefit of the patient, by destroying the pretexts which nature does not fail to oppose in such a case, to the Divine Will.

1. "If it only concerned myself," the sick man will say, "I could easily divine what to do; but my family,—my children,—what will become of them?" Reply: "God is their Father and yours: He will not forsake them. He takes care of the birds of the air; will He not take care of His children! Put your trust in Him; and win by your resignation His blessing on you and your children. After all,—should they suffer here,—provided they are saved and win heaven, what does it matter? Take heed that you insure for yourself its possession: who knows but that you may be able to help them there?"

Sin is man's only true evil, as there is no real good but love and good works. We are rich enough when we possess God; and it is often safer to live in

a mediocrity bordering on indigence, than in ease and the luxuries of life.

2. Another will regret that he has not time to repent of his numerous sins. Remind him that the best and most perfect penitence is to do the will of God in every thing, and above all to accept the sickness which He sends, with all its consequences. Make him understand that this sacrifice, generously made, will alone suffice to assure him of salvation; and that the time of his sickness, if he knows how to profit by it, will furnish him the means of greatly pleasing God. Finally, let him thank God that he has not died in a time when he was guilty of mortal sin. There are those to whom death is painful, because it takes from us the possibility of doing any more for the glory of God. Here also, you should make the sick person understand that there is nothing more excellent than the holy will of God, Who knows his desires and will recompense them. The single sincere disposition to die willingly that we may possess God, will acquire for us in one moment the perfection which we desire, says Saint Augustine. Besides you wish, you say, to live that you may do good; but may not the future be dangerous for your soul? And God, Who gives you now the opportunity of assuring your eternal salvation, may He not foresee that you will be lost if your life should be prolonged?

3. It often happens that sick persons complain that

they can neither pray nor work ; but is not suffering more excellent than prayer or work ? or rather, is it not, when we suffer with resignation, the best prayer and the most meritorious work, as it is generally the most painful ?

4. You have fears for the past ? Remember that sentence of one of the friends of S. Augustine: If I will, from this moment I am the friend of GOD. *Si volo, amicus Dei ecce nunc fio.*

Yes: whatever may be the number of my sins, however enormous my guilt, if I will, from this moment I am the friend of GOD.—You regret the time of which sickness seems to deprive you ? Know well that you cannot employ it more usefully than in doing the holy will of GOD.—You wish the future were in your power ? Well; you will employ this future in loving and blessing GOD eternally. What better use can you make of it ? *Nondum credit, qui mortem timet* : He who fears death, says S. Augustine, has not a living and entire faith. He who is perfect, says the same Saint, suffers life with patience and receives death with joy. *Qui perfectus est, patienter vivit et delectabiliter moritur.*

5. You are grieved at dying so young. But how many die still younger ? What would long life profit you, if for all eternity you should be separated from GOD, and burning in the flames of hell ? Ought you not rather to return thanks to GOD that He has preserved you to this day, and now gives you the



opportunity of obtaining heaven?—You have here relations, children whom you love ; and must not they also die? Will they not soon follow you to the heaven of which you are about to take possession?—You have great riches, possessions to which your heart is attached ; but what are all these in comparison with the heaven offered to you by GOD? Would these perishable riches have followed you later to the grave? And is it not better to leave them when GOD rules, than to possess them with the danger of one day losing them with sorrow? .

**ART. V. *How we must contend with the different temptations to which Sickness is exposed.***

We cannot here enter with detail into all the temptations to which sickness may expose us, but we will speak of the most common, and point out the principal methods which may be used to overcome them.

1. *Temptation against faith.*—These temptations generally attack educated persons who have acquired the habit of submitting everything to the examination of their reason, and who lean too much upon their own judgments. If the sick person is with this kind of temptation, you must advise him, as the best remedy, to change the subject, and to occupy himself with other acts, such as contrition, hope, and charity. Let him thank GOD for the blessing of being born in the

bosom of the Church Catholic, and of dying in her communion. Let him return no other answer to the suggestions of the evil spirit, than—*I believe what holy Church believes and teaches.* Let him not forget that the merit of faith consists in submitting his mind to truths that he cannot understand; and that this obedience to God, the Master of minds and hearts, pleases Him infinitely. You may, if the temptation continues to harass the sick person, remind him that the divinity of the Christian religion is abundantly proved by its establishment throughout all the world, by numerous miracles worked in its favor, by millions of martyrs who have died in confirmation of their faith, &c.

Humility, and the consciousness of his ignorance and the weakness of his mind, is also a very efficacious means of overcoming this temptation. What am I, O my God, to set myself up above the whole Church, and to call in question so many doctors and saints? Ignorant and blind, what can I do but humbly submit to believe firmly what Thou teachest me? O nothingness, humble thyself! Corruption and misery, be silent!

2. *Temptation to despair.*—This is the principal temptation with which the devil assaults the sick. This is why one should be very careful in speaking to them of the justice of God—the pains of the damned—in setting before them the enormity of their guilt; but we should rather seek to inspire them with trust

in the mercy of God, and in the Passion of the Saviour, and in the divine promise.

You will therefore remind the patient: (1) of the infinite goodness of God, Who is therefore called the *Father of Mercies*. He seeks those who fly from Him—He complains of those who will not return to Him—He assures us that He willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should live, and that He is ready to forgive a man's sins as soon as he detests them. A single act of contrition suffices to remit all the sins of life. David said to Nathan: "I have sinned." Nathan answers him: "The LORD hath put away thy sin." The publican cried out: "God be merciful to me a sinner," and was justified. The prodigal son arose, and said to his father in his sorrow: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee," and immediately the embraces of his father assured him of his pardon.

(2.) You will speak to him of the Passion of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, Who came down to earth to save sinners, as He Himself teaches. "I am not come," He says, "to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." He assures us, "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." He compares Himself to the Good Shepherd, who, leaving the care of the faithful sheep, goes after that which is lost, and brings it back upon his shoulders rejoicing, and appears thenceforth to love it with a kind of preference, as we see in S. Magdalene, S. Margaret of Cortona,

S. Augustine, and many other Saints. It is on this account that whoever has a good will should never fear damnation, since our blessed LORD, that He might not condemn us to eternal death, willed Himself to be condemned to death upon the Cross.

(3.) You should dwell upon the certainty of the divine promises, and the assurance that GOD gives us, that He will grant His grace to those that ask it. "Ask, and ye shall receive," He says to us. "Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it to you:" which promise must not only be understood as applying to the righteous, for it is written in S. Matthew (7, 8,) "Every one that asketh, receiveth." It suffices, therefore, to pray for the grace necessary to salvation to be assured of obtaining them. "The LORD is good to the soul that seeketh Him," says Jeremiah. (*Lam.* iii. 25.)

3. *Temptation to vain-glory.*—If you find that the sick person rests in a presumptuous confidence of his salvation, and leans too much upon his good works, you must remind him, in ourselves we have nothing but sin, and that all that is good in us comes from GOD, and does not belong to us: "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 *Cor.* iv. 7.) Let him not forget that no one on earth can have an infallible certainty of his eternal salvation: "No man knoweth whether he be full of either love or hatred." (*Eccles.* ix. 1); and that we ought to keep ourselves till the

end in a salutary fear, according to the advice of the Apostle (*Philip. ii.*, 12), "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

4. *Temptation to impatience.*—If the sick man suffer the pains of sickness impatiently, you will represent to him the horrible torments endured by the martyrs for the Name of JESUS CHRIST, giving themselves up to be burnt alive, cast into the fire, torn in pieces by the iron of the torturers. You will especially place before his eyes, what JESUS CHRIST, innocence itself, suffered for love of him. It is in vain to seek to avoid the sufferings of sickness, for it is impossible; and if we do not learn to receive them with patience, we shall suffer both in this life, and in the next; while if we resign ourselves to the will of God, we will not only soften the sufferings of this life, but we will increase our merit and the glory which is to be their recompence, according to that word of the Saviour, "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy." (*S. John xvi.* 20.) You will try to make the sick person understand that the sufferings which accompany the last moments of life serve to adorn his crown, since to suffer patiently is the most perfect of all works, as S. Bonaventura remarks when treating on this text. (*S. James i.* 4.) Let patience have her perfect work. Let him not forget that it is thus that GOD treats His friends in this life, the Cross being the most certain sign of our predestination. What more consoling for us, poor travellers in this vale of tears, than the word of

the Apostle: "*Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*" (2 Cor. iv. 17.) "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom. viii. 18.) The pains of death ought not to affright the heirs of a crucified God, says S. Cyprian: "*Nec terreant crucifixi hæredes, mortis supplicia.*"

You must above all carefully instil into the sick person conformity to the will of God, under whatever circumstances, whether or not the remedies are effectual, and therefore you will exhort him often to ask God for patience.

It will be well also to produce in him acts of faith, hope, and love; or to repeat to him a prayer asking for the grace of patience; for the surest and easiest way of making him pray is to pray with him. Very often you obtain nothing by saying to a sick person: *Ask—pray*; you must put in practice what you wish him to do. This remark applies equally to children, in whom you wish to inspire any feeling of piety, and extends to many like cases. Below you will find the forms of different acts which should be read to the sick person.

5. *Temptation to hatred and vengeance.*—You must remind the sick person who still harbours hatred against his neighbour, of the precept imposed on all Christians to love their enemies. (*S. Luke vi. 27, 28.*) It is God Who commands this, and we must obey.

To forgive their enemies is an essential condition for those who hope to obtain it from God, and it is likewise the certain reward: that is to say, if you do not forgive, God will not forgive you; and on the contrary, if you forgive, God will forgive you. (*S. Luke vi. 37.*) Your brother has treated you unjustly, you say; but is not your conduct towards God still more guilty? If then you desire God to forget the wrong you reproach yourself with having done towards Him, how much more ought you not to forgive your brother the injury you have received from him? Nothing is more pleasing to God than the forgiveness of injuries. The history of the Saints furnishes us with many proofs of this truth; but the most beautiful example that can be set before a Christian is that of His SAVIOUR dying upon the Cross, and praying for His murderers, whom He even seeks to excuse before His FATHER. It will be well to insist upon that petition in the LORD'S Prayer: "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive them that trespass against us;" and to make the sick person understand what it is He asks of God; that it would be his own condemnation if he did not forgive; while if he generously sacrifices all his resentment, he may in a measure be assured of heaven, since he has fulfilled the condition imposed upon him: to certain persons you may also very usefully represent that the forgiveness of injuries is the proof of a great and generous soul, and set before them this act as so much more meritorious

for them, and to the glory of God, as it is more difficult and heroic.

You may read with advantage to the sick person who is in the case of which we are treating, the parable contained in S. Matthew xviii. 23—35.

**ART. VI.**—*Of several means which may be used to help the Sick Person to pass the time of his Sickness profitably.*

**1.** *Useful distraction which may be provided for him.*

It is useful for the consolation of the Sick to set before them is these days which sometime appear very long, a certain variety to amuse them. Nothing is more efficacious for this purpose than to put him under a sort of rule, in which you have set down the different exercises which are to fill up the day and the order in which they are to follow. You will attain this end by placing alternately, and at fixed times, —sometimes a short prayer, for example, morning and evening; then some interesting reading and short conversation, interrupted by intervals of rest, and hours fixed for dressing and tending, giving remedies or nourishment. One word of piety said from time to time, will suffice to keep up in him good thoughts to encourage or console him.



*2. Of reading to Sick Persons, and Books which may be read to them, or that they may read with profit.*

When the sickness is lingering, and the sufferings are not acute, it is often profitable to read aloud to the patient, to edify as well as to amuse and comfort him.

But in order that this reading may be useful, it should be suitable to the necessities and disposition of the patient. In the same way that it is impossible to use the same language indifferently to all, you cannot with profit put into their hands the same books. It is well to consult the priest who visits the sick person, who may not only advise, but also may lend some good book. The lives of Saints, writers and subjects of piety treated with simplicity, and in some instances, books in which the truths of religion are brought forward with clearness and solidity, and in which infidel arguments are refuted. These are, in general, the books which may be most useful to sick persons. Anything that tends to excite hope, to keep up resignation, and conformity to the will of God, to sustain the patience of the sufferer, to make him understand and feel the love of our LORD JESUS CHRIST for sinners, and the infinite mercy of God, will be made useful for his soul; and those books which bring forward these truths, will make a more salutary impression upon him than those which treat of the divine justice. These may even become hurtful to certain persons.

### 3. *Of a Picture of the Crucifixion.*

It is very desirable that the sick person should have a picture of the Crucifixion near to him. The contemplation of the SAVIOUR dying upon the Cross for us, will sustain him in the sufferings of sickness, and fortify him against the terrors of death.

### 4. *Of the Prayers which should be used by the Sick, and Acts which should be suggested from time to time.*

You should neglect nothing which may lead the sick person to pray : if you cannot attain this end, you should try to make up for it by praying aloud in his presence and in his name. But nothing is more profitable, under these circumstances, than to produce in him acts of the principal virtues most necessary to his position. We have put together a few, taken, for the most part, from Holy Scripture. You will choose those which are most suited to the disposition of each person and his spiritual needs, as far as you can judge of them, and you will be content with suggesting one or two at a time. You will understand that they should be read to the sick person, or repeated aloud with him, that he may enter more and more into the feelings which they express.

#### i. ACTS OF CONTRITION.

“ Have mercy upon me, O GOD, after Thy great mercy.” *Ps. li. 1.*

"Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants." *S. Luke xv. 18.*

"God be merciful to me a sinner." *S. Luke xviii. 13.*

"I confess in Thy presence, that I have sinned exceedingly, in thought, word, and deed, by my fault, by my great fault."

"LORD, enter not into judgment with Thy servant." *Ps. cxliii. 2.*

"Turn Thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities." *Ps. li. 9.*

"A broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." *Ps. li. 17.*

"O LORD, rebuke me not in Thine indignation, neither chasten me in Thy heavy displeasure." *Ps. xxxviii. 1.*

"O remember not the sins and offences of my youth." *Ps. xxv. 7.*

"Burn, LORD, cut, chasten me in this world, if only Thou wilt spare me in the next." *S. Aug.*

"O Thou Who didst pardon Mary Magdalene, Thou Who didst hear the penitent thief, Thou hast given to me also, hope of pardon."

## ii. ACTS OF HOPE.

"The LORD is my light and my salvation : whom then shall I fear?" *Ps. xxvii. 1.*

"Into Thy hands I commend my spirit, for Thou hast redeemed me, O LORD, Thou God of truth." *Ps. xxxi. 6.*

"In Thee, O LORD, have I put my trust; let me never be put to confusion." *Ps.* xxxi. 1.

"LORD JESUS, receive my spirit." *Acts* vii. 59.

"FATHER, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."  
*S. Luke* xxiii. 46.

"O good JESUS, hide me in Thy holy wounds."

"Though an host of men were laid against me, yet shall not mine heart be afraid. . . . Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me, O LORD." *Ps.* xxvii. 3, and xxiii. 4.

"I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." *S. Matt.* ix. 13.

"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" *Rom.* viii. 32.

Think, kind JESU! my salvation  
Caused Thy wondrous Incarnation;  
Leave me not to reprobation!

Faint and weary Thou hast sought me,  
On the Cross of suffering bought me:  
Shall such grace be vainly brought me?

### iii. ACTS OF LOVE TO GOD.

"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison with Thee." *Ps.* lxxiii. 24.

"The LORD Himself is the portion of mine inherit-

ance and of my cup: Thou shalt maintain my lot.”  
*Ps.* xvi. 6.

“Too late have I known Thee, too late have I loved Thee.” *S. Aug.*

“Who shall separate us from the love of CHRIST? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him That loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of GOD, which is in CHRIST JESUS our LORD.” *Rom.* viii. 35, 37, 38, 39.

“My GOD, Whose goodness is infinite, I love Thee above all things. I love Thee with all my heart. My GOD, I am not worthy to love Thee, because of my sins, but for the love of JESUS Thy SON, make me worthy.”

“I desire that all men should love Thee! I desire that Thou shouldst be always loved, that I could love Thee more!”

“O JESUS, let me never be separated from Thee.”

“I will love Thee, O LORD, my strength! The LORD is my stony rock, my defence, and my Saviour.”  
*Ps.* xviii. 1.

#### iv. ACTS OF THANKSGIVING FOR GRACES RECEIVED.

“I will bless the LORD at all times: His praise shall ever be in my mouth.” *Ps.* xxxiv. 1.

"Blessed be the Name of the LORD, from this time forth for evermore." *Ps.* cxiii. 2.

"Blessed be the LORD GOD of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people." *S. Luke* i. 68.

#### V. ACTS OF HUMILITY.

"O look Thou upon me, and be merciful unto me." *Ps.* cxix. 132.

"Look upon my adversity and misery, and forgive me all my sin." *Ps.* xxv. 17.

"God be merciful unto me a sinner." *S. Luke* xviii. 13.

What shall I, frail man, be pleading,  
Who for me be interceding  
When the just are mercy needing?

"Forsake me not, O LORD, my GOD: be not Thou far from me." *Ps.* xxxviii. 21.

#### VI. ACTS OF CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." *S. Matt.* vi. 10.

"I will bless the LORD at all times, His praise shall ever be in my mouth." *Ps.* xxxiv. 1.

"FATHER, Thy will, not mine be done."

"O my FATHER, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." *S. Matt.* xxvi. 39.

"Even so, FATHER, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." *S. Matt.* xi. 26.

"Behold me, O LORD, do with me what shall please Thee. I will what Thou wilt : I will suffer as much as Thou desirest."

"Into Thy hands I commit my soul and my body, my life and my death."

"I am altogether Thine, my GOD ; I ask of Thee only one thing : Thy grace and Thy love."

"I accept sickness, O GOD ; I accept the pains which I suffer ; I accept all it shall please Thy goodness to send me. I am Thine, O save me."

#### VII. ACTS OF DESIRE TO SEE GOD, AND THE GLORY OF HEAVEN.

"When shall I come to appear before the Presence of GOD?" *Ps.* xlii. 2.

"My soul is athirst for GOD, even for the living GOD." *Ps.* xlii. 2.

"Woe is me that I am constrained to dwell with Mesech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar." *Ps.* cxx. 4.

"When, O my GOD, shall I see Thee face to face? When shall I love Thee perfectly, O infinite Beauty?"

"O my JESUS, when shall I see Thee as Thou art, and behold Thy sacred Wounds?"

"One thing have I desired of the LORD, which I will require ; even that I may dwell in the House of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the LORD, and to visit His temple." *Ps.* xxvii. 4.

## viii. OF THE SACRAMENTS.

It is not sufficient that the sick person should once receive the Blessed Sacrament, you must see that this help and consolation is procured for him as often as will be judged expedient. You will, therefore, use means that the Priest may frequently see him, to hear his confession, and to give him Holy Communion. You will seek to instil into the sick person the desire for as precious a grace; for there he will find the help and consolation that he needs; since nothing more softens the pain of sickness than the peace of souls, and hope which is obtained in the Sacrament.

This point is especially important when the sickness is lingering, or the sick person is in greater temptation of offending God, either on account of evil habits previously contracted, or by feelings of vengeance and hatred which may easily be re-awakened through the want of patience and resignation, when his sufferings are acute.

This advice to receive frequently the Sacrament, or at least absolution during sickness, is applicable not only to cases above described, but in all circumstances, since by these means: 1, we obtain more abundant graces; 2, we obtain pardon for faults into which we may have fallen since our last confession; 3, we may make amends for these faults.

It would also be well that the sick person should agree with the Priest upon some sign to be used when



he has lost the power of speech, to show him that he desires to receive absolution, or that he agrees to the propositions made to him, and that he accuses himself of each, and asks pardon for his faults.

**ART. VII.—***How to acquaint the Sick Person with his danger, if it should be necessary.*

You must not keep the sick person in a state of false confidence about his state and the seriousness of his illness: these deceitful hopes which are nourished in the heart of the sick, even when we see the certainty of their death, keeps them back from offering to God the sacrifice of their life, and may expose them to be contented with equivocal disposition and a half will with regard to the future. “It is great cruelty,” said Louis XIII., dangerously wounded, when on his journey to Lyons, “not to warn the sick man when you see him in danger; because, as he who is on the brink of a precipice which he does not see, is inevitably lost, if he is not told of it; so he who draws near his end, if he is allowed to die without being told of his peril, falls often into an abyss of woe and eternal misery.”\*

Neither must you, in ordinary cases, speak too openly of death and its consequences. The imagina-

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\* The fear of dying without knowing or preparing for it, has made some persons agree amongst themselves to warn each other charitably in case of sickness, when there is appearance of danger.

tion may easily revolt from the presence of a sacrifice so painful to nature. But you will warn the patient not to depend too much on what is said to him by his relatives or physicians ; you will exhort him to set his affairs in order, and to leave the issue of his sickness in God's hands : you will let him know the seriousness of his illness and the risk he runs—but gradually, so as not to frighten him, especially when you fear to produce an unfavourable impression by speaking too openly. Thus you will not hide the truth from him, but you will acquaint him with it by degrees. Nevertheless, you must not forget that the fear of displeasing the sick, of frightening them, or of grieving them by proposing that they should prepare to receive the blessed Sacrament, is not as well founded as is generally believed. You will find a great number who only wait for this proposal to accede to it, and who only desire that it should be proposed to them.

There are some persons to whom the thought of death is familiar, and to whom it comes as a consolation : you will speak more freely to them. You will be more reserved with those persons who shrink from the idea of death, and in whose minds the thoughts of God's judgments produce excessive trouble. The sincere desire of the spiritual welfare of the sick person, and to use the method most profitable for him, is the sovereign rule to be followed in this matter. You will obtain by prayer the guidance you need for yourself, and the grace which is necessary for the sick person.

ART. VIII.—*How to act with regard to the Will.*

It is useful, according to the condition of the sick person, to be acquainted with his temporal affairs; if his will is made, and his last wishes clearly expressed, and if all is made in good order. In case the sick person has never taken this precaution, you should exhort him not to put it off any longer, at the risk of exposing his family to law-suits and difficulties which are the ordinary consequences of so doing. “Let the will be made at the beginning of the illness.” This is what was decreed by the Synod of Lyons, held in 1404. Then the sick person is more at liberty to seek advice, and to act upon it. The strength which is still given to him, will prevent those sad consequences of a wandering and failing mind which sick persons generally experience at the approach of death, and which renders them incapable, so to speak, of acting up to the light of reason and the advice of prudent persons. Besides it is very sad that when the soul has not time enough to give to the important business of its salvation, it should be taken off by temporal interests. It will not then be justice, but the skill, or the solicitation of some importunate heir, or of some person more dearly loved, which will influence him frequently to the prejudice of his family, and of which the sick person will have to render account at the tribunal of God. You will suggest to him, therefore, to take advantage of the time, while

he still enjoys the possession of all his faculties, to set his affairs in order; and you will guard, if it should be necessary, against unjust feelings which might influence him to favour one part of his heirs to the prejudice of others; which almost always causes hatred and division in families. These preferences, besides, are generally the effect of natural affection, as in opposition to reason and the requirements of justice.

You may offer to call for a solicitor; but you must be careful to conceal nothing from the sick person which may prejudice a third party. In these circumstances you must use great prudence and circumspection. You must place him in the presence of eternity, of God and his soul, and leave him to his conscience, unless he puts any questions to you. If, nevertheless, he has any restitution to make, you must urge him to make it. If, besides, you can dispose him to anything for the good of his soul—for example, for the Church, or the benefit of the poor, let him do it immediately; but avoid even the suspicion of avarice by reminding him of it. Let him be exhorted not to leave to his heirs the care of acquitting his pious legacies, and let him not forget to fulfil all his obligations and to pay his debts. What will it advantage him, if, to enrich his family, who will soon forget him, he exposes himself, by his injustice, to burn eternally in the flames of hell? “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his soul?” (*S. Matt.* xvi. 26.)

## CHAPTER IV.

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*How to assist the Sick Person in preparing for Confession.*

When the sick person has made up his mind to confess, you can offer to help him to prepare without fatigue and trouble.

To this end you may suggest some reflections which would make him appreciate the benefit of a good confession: such as the following—I cannot lengthen my life here, but I may make it holier: I cannot ensure temporal happiness in this world, but I can gain eternal happiness.

Louis XI., King of France, in his last illness gave 500 crowns a day to his physician, to ensure his neglecting nothing that would prolong his life. Alas! time cannot be bought with money, but eternity may be obtained by good works.

A single moment well employed will suffice to win eternity. A single confession well made at the hour of death may suffice to repair the past, to obtain pardon for all sins, to win heaven.

O God, what thanks can I return Thee that Thou hast had mercy upon me even till this day, and given

me the means of being restored to Thy friendship? Where should I now be, if I had died in sin?

Help me, LORD, to profit by the grace which Thou givest us to-day : I desire to make a good confession. My God, I have much offended Thee, but I hope in Thy mercy. Thou didst institute penance for the remission of sins ; Thou canst not refuse to me that pardon which Thou hast so solemnly promised to those sinners who should come to Thee.

You will comfort the sick person, and lighten the labour of preparation, by reading to him such an examination of conscience as may be found in many books, and you will choose such as are appropriate to the condition of the sick person, and the state of his conscience.\* Finally, you must reassure him with regard to the difficulties which frighten him, and tell him that the Priest will supply what he is unable to find out for himself. If the person who waits upon the sick man reads to him an examination of conscience, prudence may sometimes dictate the dwelling on certain sins only in a general way : it will be sufficient then to advise the sick person to ask the Priest to help him in this point, and to make the necessary interrogations.

If you know that the sick person has restitutions to make, hatred to get rid of, scandal to repair, or that he is actually in a state of sin, you would suggest to

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\* One will be found at the end of this work.

him prudently to prepare for absolution by the accomplishment of these essential obligations. If you have cause to fear that, through ignorance or forgetfulness, he does not know the necessary truths of salvation, you will recall them to his mind by reading slowly, and at different times the abridgement given below.

*Of the principal Truths which must be remembered  
when we prepare for Absolution and Holy  
Communion.*

1. What is GOD ?

GOD is a Spirit infinitely perfect, the Creator and LORD of all things.

2. What is the HOLY TRINITY ?

One GOD in Three Persons, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, Who are equal in all things.

3. Who is JESUS CHRIST ?

JESUS CHRIST is the SON of GOD, Who was made man for us, by taking a body and soul like ours from the Blessed Virgin Mary.

4. How and why did He die ?

JESUS CHRIST died upon the Cross to redeem us from sin and hell.

5. What became of Him after His death ?

He rose again the third day, which is Easter Day ; then He ascended into heaven, body and soul, on Ascension Day.

**6. What will become of us after death ?**

Those who die in a state of grace will go to heaven for ever ; and those who die in sin will go to hell for all eternity.

**7. What is the condition of that man who commits mortal sin ?**

He has lost the friendship of GOD, and drives the HOLY SPIRIT from his heart : he has become the abode of evil spirits ; he has lost the fruits of his good works, and he will go to hell if he dies in this unhappy condition.

**8. What must he do to obtain pardon for his sins ?**

He must have true contrition for them, confess them sincerely, make restitution for the evil he has done, and receive absolution.

**9. What happens when, with true repentance, we receive absolution ?**

All our sins are forgiven through the merits of the Blood of JESUS CHRIST, the devil is driven from our hearts, the HOLY SPIRIT descends into them, we become again the friends of GOD ; our good works are restored to us, with the right of going to heaven if we continue in a state of grace till our death.

**10. What do we receive in Holy Communion ?**

We receive JESUS CHRIST Himself ; His Body and Blood, soul and divinity.



EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE ON THE PRINCIPAL  
DUTIES OF A CHRISTIAN: WHICH MAY BE READ  
TO THE SICK PERSON.

I. *The Theological Virtues.*

*Faith.* Am I sufficiently instructed in the truths of religion? Have I allowed myself voluntarily to doubt any article of faith? Have I spoken against the truth? Have I read books written against the faith?

*Hope.* Have I yielded to despair? What was the cause of it? Have I sinned by presumption?

*Charity.* Has human respect hindered me from fulfilling my duties? Have I not had a dislike to holy things? Have I led my neighbour into sin by my advice or example? Have I sought for occasions of sin?

II. *The Commandments of God.*

1. Have I yielded to any superstition?

2. Have I habitually neglected prayer?

3. Have I sworn, blasphemed the Name of God, or violated any vow?

4. Have I worked, or caused others to work, on the Sunday? Have I neglected, or caused others to neglect the blessed Sacrament? Have I attended to it as I ought?

5. Have I nothing to reproach myself with regarding my parents, my masters, my superiors, and my

Priests? Have I given way to irreverent speaking or disobedience towards them? Have I wished for their death?

(*If the person is married.*) Have I anything where-with to reproach myself with respect to my husband, (or my wife,) my children, my servants? Have I taken care of their education, their instruction? Have I watched that they fulfilled the duties of their religion? Have I never led them into sin? Have I neglected to correct them? to watch over them?

6. Have I borne any hatred in my heart against my neighbour? Any desire of vengeance? Have I used bad language to him? Have I quarrelled with any one? Have I struck him? &c.

7. Have I been guilty of any sin against this Commandment, by thought or desire, by words of double meaning, too free conversations, but pictures, dangerous reading, improper songs? By look, or action? Have I led my neighbour into sin? Am I not in the habit of sin, in the occasion of it?

8 and 10. Have I wronged my neighbour in his goods; my parents, masters, workmen or servants, any other persons, government? Have I repaired the wrongs I have done? Have I kept anything which did not belong to me?

9. Have I lied in such a way as to injure religion, justice, charity? Have I spoke evil, calumniated, or taken pleasure in listening to evil speaking or calumny? Have I repaired the wrong I have done to

my neighbour by evil speaking? Have I formed rash judgments?

### III.

Have I observed the rules laid down by the Church in days of fasting, abstinence?

Have I communicated, at least three times a year?

### IV. *Deadly Sins.*

Have I given way to excess in eating and drinking?

Have I been proud even to despising all men, and setting myself up even against God?

Have I habitually neglected the business of my soul?

Have I given way to envy?

### V. *Duties of Condition.*

Married persons, masters or servants, having such or such an employment, occupation, condition, have each to find out in what their conscience reproaches them, if they would not have it brought against them in the judgment of God.

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We have here pointed out the most ordinary kinds of sin. It is necessary also to mention the number, at least as much as can be remembered. Those circumstances which would alter the nature of the sin must be mentioned.

*How to dispose the Sick Person to contrition for his faults.*

After having assisted the sick person in preparing for his confession, you will endeavour to produce in him some acts of contrition, by reminding him of the principal motives which tend to excite it; and you may read aloud and slowly the following forms, which it will be proper to repeat from time to time. Above all, you will teach the sick man—1. That contrition is a grace which can only come from God, and consequently we ought to ask Him for it: 2. That we are certain to obtain it if we ask sincerely; since on one hand it is an obligation to detest the sins of which we are guilty; and on the other, since we are unable to fulfil this obligation, and produce this act by the strength of nature, God Himself grants the grace necessary for this end to those who ask Him for it, as He has promised. 3. That such is the necessity of contrition, that it cannot be dispensed with; so that if the sinner dies without having abhorred his sins, he would be infallibly condemned at the judgment of God.

ACTS OF CONTRITION WHICH MAY BE READ TO  
THE SICK PERSON.

*(One of these acts at a time will suffice: read slowly, and pausing at intervals.)*

1. O God, my Creator and my Saviour, I have thought upon Thy judgments, and am filled with fear.

Who shall not fear Thee, King of Nations? LORD, if I look back upon my life, I see nothing but a long chain of sins. And how can I not be afraid? My sins are more in number than the hairs of my head—my iniquities rise up before me as a great mountain, and are like a sore burden too heavy for me to bear. If Thou, LORD, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O LORD, who may abide it? Woe is me, why have I refused to serve Thee? Why have I tempted Thy anger, despised Thy threatenings? O God, I am Thy creature, and the work of Thy hands. Look upon me, and have mercy upon me. Forgive me, O LORD; Thou knowest our weakness; Thou knowest that we are but dust. I have sinned, O LORD, I confess it; I have sinned exceedingly. Remember Thou Thy mercy, O Thou Lover of souls, Who didst not make us that we should be lost, but that Thou mightest save us. I have merited hell, O God, I acknowledge it; I have merited it many times. But remember what Thou hast taught us by the mouth of Thy prophets: “As I live, saith the LORD God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” (*Ezek. xxxiii. 11.*) Thou knowest, O LORD, that I abhor my sins, that I have resolved no more to offend Thee; and how dare I anew incur Thy hatred? LORD, I hope in Thee. Refuse not to forgive me, for Thou art the FATHER of Mercies. My heart is made to love Thee, and not to hate Thee.

2. FATHER, *I have sinned against heaven and before Thee.* I am not worthy to lift up mine eyes towards heaven, I no longer deserve to be called Thy son. It is true, I acknowledge it, O my God, and how can I deny it when my iniquities cry out so loudly against me? LORD, my sin is ever before me: I cannot hide it, and of myself I cannot blot it out.

How foolish have I been, O my God! Have I ever found happiness away from Thee, and has not the world always deceived me? Wherefore then have I gone aside from Thy commandments? What have I gained by offending Thee, O Thou Who art the life of my soul, my consolation here, my hope in heaven, and my only good? How ungrateful am I! Thou hast loaded me with benefits, and I have only repaid Thee with my crimes: Thou hast never ceased to protect me, and I have done nothing but outrage Thee: and Thou, O God, Whose goodness is infinite, Thou still openest to me the arms of Thy mercy; Thou vouchsafest still to offer me the pardon of which I have made myself so often unworthy. *Consider your ways, sinners,* Thou sayest; *return to God.*—It is done, O God, I am Thine; Thy love has triumphed over the hardness of my heart. I have known Thee, and have loved Thee too late; I will love Thee at least faithfully from henceforth, and nothing shall separate me from Thee. Yes; whatever it costs me, I will be saved—I will escape hell, I will win heaven. I will serve, love Thee, my God; I

will never again offend Thee. O LORD! grant me this grace, all unworthy as I am."

It will be well to remind the sick person from time to time that the best sacrifice he can offer—that which is most *agreeable* to GOD, the most profitable for himself, and that which is best fitted for his condition, is patience under his sufferings, and resignation to the will of GOD. You will make him understand that his casting himself upon GOD entirely is an heroic act, and you can cause him to say, from time to time, So be it, O GOD, since Thou hast willed it. LORD, I commit myself into Thy fatherly hands. Thy will, not mine, be done. Amen. Amen.

(You may very profitably read to the sick person, some of the Psalms, or some chapters in the *Imitation*, which have reference to his circumstances.)

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*Here follow short Ejaculations to be said by the Sick Person.*

Behold, O most sweet JESUS, in what misery I lie here, and what pain I suffer.

This sickness is very tedious to me: but I will try to endure it willingly for Thy love.

In Thy most loving heart I lay up all my griefs: and by it I offer the same to Thy eternal praise.

Thou knowest, O merciful JESUS, that I cannot pray much; therefore I pray Thee to supply this defect with Thy love.

Vouchsafe, O loving JESUS, to render thanks to Thy eternal FATHER, for this my sickness; as Thou didst render thanks to Him on the Cross for all Thine own pains.

Vouchsafe to offer to Thy beloved FATHER, all my sufferings as Thou didst offer to Him all Thy agonies, as an oblation well pleasing to Him.

I desire to bear this my sickness with the same intention with which Thou didst endure Thy most bitter Passion and Death.

Whatever I suffer, or am to suffer, let me suffer it in Thy love, and seek no other reward but that I may please Thee.

If Thou increasest my pain, increase also my patience, for Thou knowest my great misery.

I resign myself entirely to Thy most holy will, and I say in Thy words and with Thy intention : FATHER, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me : nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done !

*Another Prayer in the very Agony of Death.*

O most sweet JESUS, in this my extreme need, I, Thy unworthy creature, and a most grievous sinner, fly to Thee with a humble and contrite heart, in confidence that, as Thou didst receive the dying thief at the last moment of his life, so Thou wilt not cast me out who come to Thee. Behold, O my LORD, on all sides is distress and misery, and the attacks of the devil. If Thou castest me out, who then will receive



me? If Thou failest me, who will console me? Therefore I give myself entirely to Thy will; for living or dying, I cannot escape Thy hands. Woe is me, O my LORD, that I have ever offended Thee; that I have so often neglected Thy inspirations and warnings, that I have loved other things more than Thee. But call to mind Thy precious Blood shed for me, and let it not have been shed in vain. Let Thy pains, Thy Blood, Thy merits satisfy for me, and win for me heaven. To Thee, O LORD JESUS, I commend my soul, my hopes, my all; and more especially the last moments of my life. O LORD, in Thee have I trusted, let me never be confounded.

*Other Ejaculations to be suggested to a Dying Person.*

O most merciful JESUS, by Thy woes, by Thy Wounds, by Thy Blood, by Thy Death, have mercy upon me now, and in the hour of my death.

O most dear JESUS, set Thy Passion and Thy Death between Thy judgment and my soul, now and in the hour of my death.

O most tender JESUS, by that bitterness which Thy most blessed Soul felt when it departed from Thy most blessed Body, I pray Thee to have mercy on my soul in its departure, and to bring it into life eternal.

JESUS CHRIST, crucified for me, have mercy on me, and forgive my sins.

O most gentle Lamb of GOD, That takest away the sins of the world, take away from me all my sins.

JESU, salvation of the weak ; JESU, salvation of sinners ; JESU, helper of them that are in agony, cast me not out, because I believe in Thee ; repel me not, because I hope in Thee ; suffer me not to be separated from Thee, because I love Thee with all my heart, and hope to love Thee for ever.

Remember, O good JESUS, what Thou didst suffer for me : remember by how bitter a death Thou didst die for me.

I believe in Thee, O my JESUS : I hope in Thee, O my JESUS ; I love Thee, O my JESUS.

And because I love Thee, therefore I grieve for all my sins. Because I love Thee, I resolve never more to offend Thee. Would that I had never offended Thee, that I had never sinned, that I had always loved Thee.

I cast all my sins into the depths of Thy mercy, and into Thy bleeding wounds.

I desire to accept this, my death, in honour of Thy Death, and to unite it with Thine.

O JESUS, I would live to Thee ; O JESUS, and would die to Thee : JESUS, be Thou my JESUS, my everlasting Saviour.

FINIS.

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